

RELIGION IN LIFE

A CHRISTIAN QUARTERLY

Vol. VI

Spring Number, 1937

No. 2

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Business communications regarding subscriptions, etc., should be addressed to The Abingdon Press, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Entered as second-class matter January 16, 1932, at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. This number is the April, 1937, issue.

Subscription price, \$2.00 per year; postage free U. S. Possessions and Mexico; to Canada, 18 cents additional; other foreign postage, 50 cents; single copies, 75 cents.

Published by
THE ABINGDON PRESS
NEW YORK

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CHICAGO

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The Restoration of Theology

JOHN A. MACKAY

IN the Storr's Lectures which he delivered last year at Yale University, and which have since been published under the title, *The Higher Learning in America*, President Robert Maynard Hutchins of the University of Chicago launches a philippic against the present state of higher education in this country. In the judgment of this university president the modern American university is like an encyclopedia whose only unity is in its alphabetical arrangement. It has become a service station by the way-side of life, sensitive to the transient whims and needs of the public, whom it seeks to serve. Exclusively mastered by the standards of the empirical and historical sciences, it has produced a state of intellectual atomism and general cultural anarchy. What is lacking? Thought must be brought once again under the direction of luminous and compelling first principles. If cultural chaos and meaninglessness are to come to an end education must be mastered and lit up by a transcendent principle of unity. This principle can only be derived from metaphysics, as among the Greeks, or from theology, as in the medieval university.

Whereupon President Hutchins proceeds to rule out theology as the source of the unifying principle he desiderates. He does so on the ground that theology is based on revealed truth and articles of faith, implying orthodoxy and an orthodox Church, whereas, we are a faithless generation and take no stock in revelation and have no such Church. The only hope of culture, therefore, is in metaphysics. "It is in the light of metaphysics that the social sciences dealing with man and man, and the physical sciences dealing with man and nature, take shape and illuminate one another. In metaphysics we are seeking the causes of things that are. It is the highest science, the first science, and, as first, universal. . . . The aim of higher education is wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge of principles and causes. Metaphysics deals with the highest principles and causes. Therefore metaphysics is the highest wisdom. . . . If we cannot appeal to theology we must turn to metaphysics. Without theology or metaphysics a unified university cannot exist."¹

¹ Hutchins, *The Higher Learning in America*, pp. 97, 98, 99; Yale, 1936.

I

With the central thesis of President Hutchins I find myself heartily concurring. It is most certainly true that our greatest cultural need at the present time is a consistent world view, a *Weltanschauung*, as the Germans call it. I would even go further than does the Chicago president and say that a world view is needed not only to give unity and direction to university education; it is no less needed to give meaning and unity to life and thought in general. For our real problem is the problem of contemporary culture in the whole length and breadth of it.

Where I dare to take issue with this distinguished and prophetic educator is in his view of the sole relevance of metaphysics and the irrelevance of theology to the present cultural situation. I am deeply interested in metaphysics; I long for the day when a Christian metaphysic will sway thought and direct conduct in the higher centers of the nation's life. But what is needed primarily and most of all, in my judgment, is theology, great theology. We are living in that kind of a time when only the emergence and dominance of great theology will produce great philosophy on the one hand and great religion on the other.

But let us not try to settle for a moment whether the hope of culture is in metaphysics or theology. Let us rather clarify still further our thoughts and deepen our concern about the fact that some worthy principle of unity is most desperately needed in the world of today. Such a principle is being demanded of us who occupy positions of leadership. Encompassed on all sides by meaninglessness and futility, youth is listening for authoritative voices and is bracing itself for a crusade without knowing where to go, without knowing even whose sepulchre to redeem from pagan foes. Alas, if the naturally constituted mentors of youth are unable to give the leadership in thought and action that this historic moment demands!

A brief glance at the cultural scene in America and in Europe will convince us in a concrete way of the appropriateness of President Hutchins' strictures and the opportuneness of his concern. The significant thing about the intellectual attitude of this university president is that he represents a very small group of front-line educators in our midst, not themselves technical philosophers, who have caught a vision of something that has been disturbing European thinkers for a considerable time. A sense of uprootedness and spiritual homelessness is taking hold of many sensitive spirits in the

modern world. A feeling of nostalgia is sending them back along the roads of history to find lost clues to the meaning of life. There is being fulfilled in the lives of many modern men and women in this country what Professor Paul Tillich said some ten years ago about modern man in general—that, with all his liberty, “he has become uncertain in his autonomy.”

From time to time an echo breaks through to us, a reverberation sounds in the halls of culture in America of the thought-agony of more than one European cousin. One of the first European thinkers to become aware, even in the pre-war days, that we were slowly headed for a cultural crisis, was Albert Schweitzer. He tells us in his autobiography that more than a decade before the outbreak of the Great War he had become uneasy at the extent to which men were smug and complacent about our civilization. They took it for granted as something fixed, whose basic principles were unchallengeable. In the early war years, forgotten in the solitude of the African jungle, engaged day by day in tasks of mercy, this missionary doctor—who happened to be also a front-line musician, theologian, and philosopher—put into shape the Dale Memorial Lectures which he subsequently delivered before the University of Oxford in 1922 on *The Decay and the Restoration of Civilization*. In those lectures Schweitzer deplored the anti-intellectual trend in European culture that had led finally to the total absence of a guiding philosophy of life. He harked back to the days of the Enlightenment, when great philosophers like Kant and Hegel began to influence people in all ranks of life who had never so much as heard their names. Bitterly deprecating the lack of an ethic in culture and the tendency since Nietzsche to consider man solely in relation to other men and society instead of in relation to the universe as a whole, he pronounced those memorable words: “For the individual as for the community, life without a theory of things is a pathological disturbance of the higher capacity for self-direction.”²

The aftermath of the war has shown how deeply prophetic was Schweitzer's thought. In these last years something of transcendent interest has been taking place in European reflection upon the cultural problem. Three types of mind have become aware of the crisis situation that confronts us. All three see the need of a luminous, authoritative principle amid our cultural anarchy. All three hark back to different periods in the history of culture in search of a clue. All three propose different solutions. Albert Schweitzer proposes a metaphysical world view inspired by the rationalism

² A. Schweitzer, *Decay and Restoration of Civilization*, p. 86.

of the Enlightenment, which shall have at the heart of it the ethical principle of reverence for life. Jacques Maritain and his friends, following in the steps of the great Cardinal Mercier, and thinking from within the Roman Catholic tradition, propose a return to the Christian philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. The third representative figure is Karl Barth. Agonizing amid the silence of the Swiss mountains not far from the thunder of the guns on three frontiers of his native land, and deeply concerned about the source of an authoritative word for his simple parishioners, Barth went back to the Reformation and to Holy Scripture, very especially to Saint Paul.

I shall never forget one afternoon in Barth's study in Bonn, when he related to me a conversation he had had with Albert Schweitzer some years before in Münster. "You and I, Barth," said Schweitzer, "started from the same problem of cultural anarchy, relativism, and uncertainty. But while I went back to the Enlightenment you went back to the Reformation."

A rationalistic metaphysic that takes no real account of the Christian revelation; a Christian philosophy that builds upon this revelation in order to think through in the light of it the problem of life in our time; a Christian theology which concentrates supremely upon an interpretation and application of this revelation itself; these are the three principal attempts being made today within the main tradition of western civilization to cure our cultural disease and to set the face of man and society once more on a luminous road toward a new cultural era. The thesis which I want to develop on this occasion is that our major intellectual need is theology, great theology, theology that brings to a focus the rays of light that streamed from above in Jesus Christ along the line of the vertical and continue to come to us through Him, and that transmits these rays, as undimmed as possible, to every sphere of life and thought across the wide plane of the horizontal.

II

Why do I believe in the primary importance of theology in the present cultural situation? Let me indicate briefly the grounds for my conviction.

1. First, theology deals with the crucial facts of existence with a realism that philosophy does not. The traditional philosopher has invariably maintained that in order to understand reality one must occupy a detached spectator's position outside of it. He has stoutly insisted that identification with a positive religious position, by which a man makes a practical decision regarding his personal relationship to God and the

universe, incapacitates him for true philosophic reflection. There are, however, three things which the metaphysician as we have known him hitherto has forgotten. He has forgotten that truth concerning God, who is the basis of all reality, cannot be attained by the profoundest intellectual effort, because God as God can never be reduced to a mere object of thought. He has forgotten that he himself is also a part of reality and that therefore he cannot view reality truly from a spectator's balcony because he cannot become detached from himself. And then, he has woefully forgotten to take into account the stark reality of sin, which warps perception and reflection both.

The old school philosopher has entirely missed the fact that the primary need of human existence is man's need of redemption. And redemption, let it be borne in mind, means not only a stream of light such as greeted the shackled prisoners on leaving the Platonic cave, but the infusion of a new life principle such as came to Plato's disciple, Saint Augustine, in the garden at Milan. This double need of redemption the religious man feels. His spectator attitude to reality is brought to an end. Theory will not satisfy him as a basis for living; he becomes aware that life is serious business, that it is at bottom a question of "to be or not to be." He no longer thinks merely about the everlasting essence of things; like Pascal he thinks in agony of his own concrete existence as one who desperately needs God. He is confronted with a choice, but it is not a choice between ideas or theories about reality; it is a choice as to whether he himself or God will be the center of his life. He is forced to action, whereas the philosopher continues to live a balconized, spectator-like existence. But by making the right choice, by thinking existentially as a wayfarer, the religious man gains insight into a whole new world of reality. With this new insight comes a transforming, energizing experience of grace; he now strives to fulfill his destiny on the road of daily living as part of God's great scheme of things.

We are here on the border of the historic abyss that divides philosophy from theology, the bottomless gulf that opens up in human life when the consciousness of sin awakes. Theology, when it is true to its nature, takes cognizance of this gulf; philosophy must take cognizance of the reality of sin and man's basic need of redemption if it is going to make a serious contribution to the reconstruction of culture.

A young philosopher who had become powerfully aware of the fact of original sin as a problem for philosophy as well as for theology was T. E. Hulme, to whose future as a thinker, before he was killed in the Great War,

his contemporaries looked forward with great expectancy. Let me quote a significant passage from the posthumous collection of his writings entitled *Speculations*. Hulme was everything but a sentimentalist. "I want to emphasize," says he, "as clearly as I can, that I attach very little value indeed to the *sentiments* attaching to the religious attitude. I hold, quite coldly and intellectually as it were, that the way of thinking about the world and man, the conception of sin, and the categories which ultimately make up the religious attitude, are the *true* categories and the *right* way of thinking."

" . . . I have none of the feelings of *nostalgia*," he goes on, "the reverence for tradition, the desire to recapture the sentiment of Fra Angelico, which seems to animate most modern defenders of religion. All that seems to me to be bosh. What is important, is what nobody seems to realize—the dogmas like that of Original Sin, which are the closest expression of the categories of the religious attitude. That man is in no sense perfect, but a wretched creature, who can yet apprehend perfection. It is not, then, that I put up with the dogma for the sake of the sentiment, but that I may possibly swallow the sentiment for the sake of the dogma. Very few since the Renaissance have really understood the dogma, certainly very few inside the churches of recent years. If they appear occasionally even fanatical about the very word of the dogma, that is only a secondary result of belief really grounded on sentiment. Certainly no humanist could understand the dogma. They all chatter about matters which are, in comparison with this, quite secondary notions—God, Freedom, and Immortality."⁸

Our conclusion, therefore, is this. Until the reality of original sin is squarely faced as an ultimate metaphysical fact and becomes a problem for thought, and until an integral part of metaphysics is a metaphysic of conversion, metaphysics as such will not possess the necessary insight into the ultimate nature of reality; it will be unable to formulate true and adequate first principles for thought and life; it will thus be impotent to make a creative contribution to the restoration of culture. Theology must get ready, on that account, to play an increasing rôle in the cultural realm.

2. The second reason why I believe in the primacy of theology over metaphysics in the cultural situation today is that the thought systems at the heart of the most potent cultural forces of our time are theologies rather than philosophies. I mean, of course, those two socio-political systems,

⁸ Hulme, T. E., *Speculations*, pp. 70, 71 (Harcourt, Brace & Co., Inc., 1924).

Communism and Fascism, which are genuine religious faiths and which are bringing about some of the most far-reaching cultural changes in the history of mankind.

The dialectical materialism which has taken the place of the old mechanistic materialism in the thought system of the rulers of Russia has provided Russian Communists with the equivalent of God. The old materialism could inspire only a fatalistic attitude in those who accepted it as a philosophy of life. There was nothing in the universe that invited co-operation, for everything happened inexorably without human choice. Those, however, who believe in the dialectical rhythm which guarantees in our time the triumph of the messianic proletariat have a cosmic reality with which it is possible for men to co-operate. The Marxist Communist has found something equivalent to what made Luther sing "Ein Feste Burg ist unser Gott" ("A Mighty Fortress is our God"). He feels himself to be invincible because the stars in their courses fight against the Sisera of the Bourgeoise. Thus, while he fights against religion, he does so in the name and in the strength of a religious faith which is rooted in the nature of things.

Herein consists the challenge of Communism to popular Christianity. In his book, *Creative Society*, Professor John Macmurray sounds the note of warning to bourgeois Christianity among us. Aware of the fact that for many Christians God is as much a mere idea as He is for the typical philosopher, Macmurray asks the tremendous question whether a faith that repudiates religion may not in the end overwhelm a religion that repudiates God. Another way of putting this would be to say that belief in the idea of God which lies at the heart of philosophy and of much popular religion does not have the remotest semblance of a chance when matched against the theology of men of passionate religious faith.

The point I am trying to make will become clearer if we consider the other new faith of our time, that particular phase of Fascism known as National Socialism. When Karl Heim, the philosopher theologian of Tübingen, published in 1931 the first volume of his theological system, *Faith and Thought*, he devoted the introduction to a long discussion of the cultural anarchy then obtaining because of the absence of a unifying world view. After the book had gone through two editions the Nazi Revolution broke out. When the third edition was published it was an entirely new book, written to meet a totally new cultural situation. No longer was German thought without the direction of a unifying philosophy. The

"Caesarless, terrible time" of Albert Schweitzer had passed. A new Caesar had appeared and in his train had come theologians of a new faith and the hierarchs of a new church—Alfred Rosenberg, Ernst Jünger, and Ernst Bergmann. Heim thus synthesizes a number of significant passages from Rosenberg's extraordinary book, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*. This is what the theologian of the new German polytheistic faith says: "Today a new faith has arisen: the blood-myth, the belief that to fight for the Blood is to fight for the divine in man; the belief—embodied with a vision that leaves no possibility for doubt—that the Nordic Blood presents that mystery by which the ancient sacraments are superseded and transcended.' Hence arises 'the new world-view of our time: the soul of the people, bound to one particular race, is the measure of all our thoughts, desires, and activities, the ultimate standard of our values.' 'This inner voice demands today that the blood-myth and the soul-myth, Race and Self, People and Personality, Blood and Honor, these alone, these and literally nothing else, without any kind of compromise, must penetrate, support, and determine the whole of life.' The *mythus* 'will suffer no other claimant to the supreme value beside itself.' 'The God, whom we reverence, would have no existence but for our Soul and our Blood: so for our time would the creed of a Meister Eckhart run.'"⁴

A news cutting from the *New York Times* of January 30 is a striking comment upon the way in which this new theology is being applied in the Third Reich: "In Mecklenburg," reads the cable, "Archdeacon Brose and Pastor Harloff of the Protestant Cathedral in Güstrow have introduced a new form of communion service. The pastor, presenting bread and wine to the congregation, says: 'God has given us bread from the German earth that shall nourish our faith, that we may remain loyal and true to the German earth. God gave the seed that is the blood of the earth. We drink that we may live in loyalty. We desire to make our lives sacred wholly to the nation. We bring to the nation this sacrifice in all truth and loyalty.'"⁵ In such a cultural scene the very conception of an international God is anathema.

What has impressed Karl Heim is the fact that in the new Nihilism now obtaining in Germany not only has it become impossible to conceive a God beyond, but the very problem of a transcendent God has become unreal.

⁴ Heim, K., *God Transcendent*, p. 7; Nisbet & Co., Ltd., trans. from 3rd Ger. ed.

⁵ *New York Times*, January 30, 1937.

It is to this problem that Heim addresses himself. He labors to find a place for the Almighty in the world of Rosenberg, now that the intellectual problem of a dwelling place for God has seriously arisen. What success he may have in his attempt at laying the "Foundation for a Christian Metaphysic" we cannot predict. But one thing we do know. It was no metaphysic, not even a Christian metaphysic, that created a spiritual center of resistance within German Protestantism to the official German faith, but a Christian theology, that of Karl Barth. For it is only a religion that can meet a religion, and only a theology that can stand up against a theology. The situation in this country is fortunately very different from the situation in Germany, but great theology is no less necessary in the American cultural scene than in the German; for we never know when demonic forces of the same religious character might take issue with Christianity and the cultural inheritance it has given us in this or any country. Should such a contingency arise, are we quite sure that the universities in this nation possess sufficient conviction about ultimate things to follow a different course from their sister institutions in Germany?

3. The third reason for the paramount importance of theology as a science in the culture of today is the fact that a true and adequate theology is required for the life and thought of the Universal Christian Church in our time. The major problem of contemporary civilization is in the realm of community. Communities founded on blood or soil or national tradition struggle desperately with communities founded upon class. That being so, the relevance of that universal community which came into being at Pentecost and which recognizes no barriers of soil or blood or class becomes more than ever apparent. In both Communist and Fascist countries the State tends increasingly to become converted into a Church with its Messiah, its holy books, its liturgy, and its theology. Only a community of love, as closely knit together as the communities of race and class and tradition, and rooted as much as they in a theological conception of its nature and destiny, can withstand the assault of Christianity's new rivals and enable the Christian community to fulfill God's purpose for mankind. That is to say, it is only confessional churches, I venture to believe, that will ultimately be able to maintain themselves in the kind of an era upon which we are now entering. If it is true that civilization needs Christianity, it is equally true that Christianity needs the Church, and still more true that the Church needs theology.

But what kind of a theology does the Church need? The scope of this study does not involve a complete theological statement, just as President Hutchins did not feel called upon to outline in the lectures to which I have referred the particular metaphysic which he considered most desirable for cultural purposes. To be consistent he must share with us some day the metaphysic of his choice; for, after all, it is the content of a metaphysic as of a theology that makes all the difference. I on my part reserve for another occasion a statement of the theology I have in mind. For the present, let this suffice, merely by way of parenthesis.

The Christian Church today, whether it be regarded as a spiritual center of resistance against the new totalitarian faiths, or as an ecumenical fellowship which has become real for the first time in world history, needs a theology that will give it resistance-strength, communal cohesion, and expansive power. It needs the theology that is inherent in the biblical records and the tradition of historic Catholic Christianity, a Theology of the Word. The Church needs to remember that God has spoken by word and deed on the plane of history. His everlasting "Nay" has sounded against all ultimate loyalty to whatever is not God. Be it Baal or Caesar that disputes His sovereignty, be His rival the Mammon of materialism or the self of Idealism, God alone must be God in the life of men and nations. His everlasting "Yea" has also sounded in Jesus Christ, the God-Man. This must the Church also remember for her life and effective service. The God-Man is the starting point and soul of Christian theology, the center of history and the clue to its meaning, the mirror in which man comes to know himself and God, the Redeemer through faith in whom he is enabled to become what God intended him to be. There is something else that the Church in our time must remember: her own true character and function as the "bearer of history." Her greatest concern must be to become existentially what she is essentially, that is, a fellowship of the Spirit, the Body of Christ, the expression of His mind, and the organ of His will. A high doctrine of the Church is needed, and a churchly theology, to set in high relief the status of the Church as an integral part of ultimate spiritual reality, whose function it is to bear witness to the Gospel, God's will to world fellowship in Jesus Christ.

III

But to all this I hear voices of dissent. The gospel is enough! We have Jesus Christ! Why bring theology back again from her Babylonian

captivity? Her fresh debut in the modern world would be a pitiful anachronism. Let her linger on if you will in seminaries and schools of religion, but even there let the study of Dogmatics be optional. Above all, I hear it said, never presume that this study can have any serious contribution to make to the cultural situation today.

But what is the gospel? Who is Jesus Christ? The reaction against theology both in secular and church circles in recent times is one of the tragic, but at the same time one of the perfectly explicable phenomena in the thought life of the last generation. We are face to face with a deep prejudice in the popular mind in regard to theology and, for that reason, to any contemplated rehabilitation of it. We have here a state of things that has various roots and phases.

1. To begin with, there is a prejudice against the status of theology as an essential and independent science because of the overweening pretensions of secular culture. One of the goals of the cultural era which began at the Renaissance, and is now fading away to give place to another, was the emancipation of man in his life and thought from every idea derived directly from Christianity. One thought system after another was constructed which would have been impossible apart from Christian ideas. These systems, however, judged the whole heritage of Christian thought and experience in terms of their conformity or unconformity to standards determined by the natural and social sciences, by historical research, by the taste of cultured people in a particular epoch, by the axioms of speculative thought. Very especially from the time of the Enlightenment secular culture became the patron, the arbiter and the guardian of Christianity and all that belonged to the Christian religion. Christianity was taken under the condescending, protecting wing of culture. The German philosopher Hegel expressed the consummation of this process in a memorable way. "While the Gates of Hell," he said, "were never able to prevail against the Christian Church, the Gates of Reason have."

What was the result of the ignoble surrender of Christianity to culture? It became the highest aspiration of many Christian leaders to make their religion the inner side of culture, its soul or its buttress as it were, its bard or its toastmaster. It never occurred to them to criticize the postulates upon which this culture was based, that "man is the measure of all things," and the famous dictum of Descartes, "I think, therefore I am," which set modern philosophy on a sidetrack from which it is only now beginning to

find its way back to the main road. And so it came about that such a dogma as that of original sin was cast out as an affront to the dignity of man and human nature. Those facets of the biblical portrait of Christ were retained which commended themselves to men of taste as a true picture of what the Man of Galilee must have been. Those elements in His teaching were retained which coincided with the subjectively approved picture of Him. Those Christian beliefs were accepted which could be validated by reason or be regarded themselves as truths of reason. The criterion which inspired biblical study was whether the events that marked the course of history in the records and the thought of the various writers was in accord with the presuppositions or prejudices of the cultured critics. Far be it from me to suggest for a moment that the literary and historical criticism of the Scriptures does not have a most legitimate place and has not rendered in many instances invaluable service. The essential Christian revelation has nothing to fear from any established fact of science or any authentic datum of history. The true lover of the Bible will ever keep an open mind to positive truth, for truth is one, and God is true. The antagonist of the Christian thinker is not the unbiased scientist and historian, but the man who brings to the study of every Christian doctrine the presuppositions of a world view antithetically opposed to the particular world view which is implicit in the Christian revelation. Unfortunately, many a Christian thinker, overawed by some prevailing philosophy, has tried to rationalize his own faith in terms of it, and in so doing has denaturalized the Christian faith and betrayed theology. From being the science of Revelation theology was content to become the science of religion and gradually became lost in the penumbra of those very important yet peripheral studies, the psychology and philosophy of religion. Theology as such thus became irrelevant to both Christianity and to life. This is where it is today in the minds of a multitude of people who say, Why try to rehabilitate theology? The answer is, The hour has come, and is long overdue, when the presuppositions of our culture must be challenged, and it is theology that must do it.

2. Another cause of the prejudice against theology has been the insistence in many representative Christian circles that Christianity is in no real sense a way of thought, but exclusively a way of life. Now it is one of the legitimate glories of religious Liberalism, with which this particular viewpoint has come to be associated, that it has emphasized ethical activity as an inseparable concomitant of true Christianity. I am not suggesting that

Liberalism was the first religious movement to make this discovery or the first to insist upon this truth. For in the New Testament there is an identity between faith and action. I am suggesting merely that, in justice to Liberalism, we should recognize that it has been associated in a glorious way with a sensitizing of the Christian conscience and an enthusiasm for great human causes in the social and international spheres. It has been most unfortunate, however, that conduct should have been left to the exclusive inspiration of Christian sentiment or to the teaching, or what was regarded as the teaching, of Jesus, while Christian doctrine and a Christian world view counted for little or nothing in inspiring and directing Christian action.

The religious education movement has reflected this anti-noetic attitude toward Christianity; its presentation of Christianity has been fragmentary and atomistic. Anything of the nature of a system has been avoided; psychology and methodology have taken the place of dogma. Thus in every way an antipathetic attitude has been created toward theology. But with what results? With this result, that men and women in our churches do not know in any intelligent or systematic way what Christianity is. At a time when the followers of the new crusading religions, to which I have already referred, are schooled in massive thought systems, which make average Christians who come up against them feel like infants, and when the young men and women of the new generation are clamoring for a coherent system of Christian belief, we have no adequate theology to give them. Once more I say the churches must return to theology and begin to agonize about the formulation of belief, or they will perish. For the plain truth is that it is not so self-evident as many people think, what Christian principles are. A word from that distinguished British thinker, Sir Walter Moberly, comes very much to the point in this connection. Writing in the last number of *Christendom*, he says: "If the world is once again to be invited to try the Christian way, the first necessity is that Christians should themselves regain some clear corporate conviction of what that way is. Here our greatest danger is that we are likely to underestimate our present intellectual bankruptcy. The comparative failure of all recent attempts to present a Christian social gospel has been partly due to the tacit assumption that there is in existence a body of Christian principles, readily accessible and agreed upon by Christians generally, which has only to be applied. But in fact such principles are still to be discovered."

"If the Church is again to be a force in the world of affairs, it will

have to rediscover its fundamental theology. What is the Christian view of man as compared with the views, for instance, of Marx and of Freud and expressed in terms equally relevant to current events and problems?"⁶

Strangely enough, there has appeared in conservative, orthodox circles in this country in these last times a most unfortunate dislike, or at least wariness, of theology and theological discussion. This attitude derives from unforgettable experiences of divisions caused by theological differences. Because theology can be divisive, as ecclesiastical history abundantly testifies, fear of controversy leads many church leaders to put a virtual ban on theological disputation. This is an unhealthy and perilous procedure, especially at such a time as this. To hush up questionings and divergences of opinion on matters of transcendent importance can easily bring a nemesis of disaster. It ought to be possible at this time of day to clarify thinking on major Christian issues without ceasing to be Christian in doing so. An European observer of the American scene said some years ago that perhaps what the country needed more than anything else was a first-class theological discussion; he meant a discussion on major issues which would challenge the thought of every man and woman in the Christian churches of America. Such a discussion would register conviction regarding the relevance of Christian thought and write the needed outlines of a theological system in the minds of every layman in the country. Then at last would there be a chance of getting beyond the weak, undogmatic and invertebrate faith which marks the life of the generality of church members today.

3. But let it be confessed, with a very great degree of sadness, that the defection of theology itself must bear a very large share of the blame for the present attitude toward it. Nowhere have the dread possibilities of the reflective power of the human mind to convert ideas into realities been so much and so tragically in evidence as where religious loyalty is transferred from God to ideas about God. At different times in the history of Christianity we find this subtle but deadly transference. No one has described this dread phenomenon better than Emil Brunner in his book, *The Mediator*. Says Brunner:

"The great danger of dogma is that too often it transforms the sign of the thing it represents into the thing itself. When this happens, a process

⁶ *Christendom*, Winter Number, 1937.

of listening to a personal message becomes a neutral process of theoretical learning and the acceptance of certain intellectual truths. The formulation of the truth has been mistaken for the truth itself."⁷

"As soon as we begin to think *about* these doctrines, instead of submitting ourselves to them, our attitude becomes wrong. They have become objects to us, when the shoe ought to be on the other foot; we ought to be objects to them. We appraise them, instead of allowing them to judge us. Our attitude toward them has become that of a spectator, and this means that our relation to them has become purely intellectual. They are no longer 'the Word,' but a theory, an object to be looked at coolly from the outside. And the result is that now we master them instead of letting them master us."⁸

"Faith has become doctrine, a matter for the intellect, the play of thought, scholasticism. This disaster is not due to the dogma, the formulated creed of the Christian Church; for without dogma the world invades the Church and lays it waste; the disaster is due to the fact that the dogma, the merely intellectual expression of the divine truth in Christ, has itself been deified. The fact that God's Word is not a static theory, that it is not a Word which man can manipulate as he chooses, but that it is a living personal challenge, has been forgotten. When dogma has ceased to be witness, that is, to point to something behind and above itself, then it is fossilized into a concrete 'Word,' a fetish. Or, if we say that the ethical meaning of the Word of God has been forgotten, we mean the same thing. The Word is no longer a challenge; it has become an object for consideration, a theory."⁹

Have you ever known people who were ready to challenge the world to point out a flaw in the orthodoxy of their belief, but who lived, nevertheless, complacent, unsympathetic, censorious lives, utterly devoid of the spirit of Christ? They stooped, when occasion demanded, to unethical procedures to further their worldly interests or even to propagate their religious faith. How did such an anomaly become possible? Because those people had converted their ideas about God into God Himself. They became idol-worshippers without knowing it, and their lives took on all the ethical marks of idolatry. They patronized and manipulated their God at will; they keep Him in their pockets or on their bookshelves. Few

⁷ Brunner, Emil, *The Mediator*, Lutterworth Press, 1934; p. 598.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 600.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 595-6.

people can be so unlovely or are so utterly lost as these. The publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of heaven before them.

I cannot leave this point without saying—and with this I bring our discussion to a close—that there is no place on earth where it is so perilously easy to make ideas of things divine do duty for the divine things themselves as in a theological seminary. Theology can so easily take the place of religion. True thoughts about Christ, thoughts which are passionately believed in and as passionately taught, can in a very subtle and awful way take the place of loyal obedience to Christ, and the daily imitation of His life. Student and professor alike are exposed to this peril, though I think that the danger of the professor—and here I think of myself in particular—is greater than that of the student, for the latter is apt to be more immersed in the real world than is his teacher.

As I begin to undertake professorial and administrative duties in the historic center of sacred learning under whose auspices we are met today, and as I look forward to years of loyal comradeship with fellow teachers and fellow students, I remind myself constantly of a famous description which Kierkegaard once gave of a theological professor. He prefaced his words with this somewhat irreverent viewpoint about professors in general: "Take away paradox from a thinker," said he, "and you have the professor." Well, that malicious observation of the great Danish philosopher is neither here nor there for our present purpose. What interests me is to refer to his description of the type of professor who can falsify the inmost nature of Christianity and bring the sacred name of theology into disrepute. Kierkegaard imagined that near the Cross of Christ stood a man who beheld the terrible scene and then became a professor of what he saw. He witnessed the persecution and imprisonment and cruel beating of the apostles and became a professor of what he had witnessed. He studied the drama of the Cross, but was never crucified with Christ. He studied apostolic history, but did not live apostolically. The living contemporaneousness of the Crucified meant nothing to him. "The 'Professor' follows steadily along—it has even become proverbial of professors that they 'follow,' follow the age, not, however, that they follow or imitate Christ. Supposing that there was a contemporary theological professor at that time when theology had not yet emerged, one could go through the Acts of the Apostles and get one's bearing by observing what he now was professor of.

"So it ended with the Apostles being crucified—and the Professor became professor of the crucifixion of the Apostles. Finally the Professor departed with a quiet, peaceful death."¹⁰

What Kierkegaard meant to say is something that has the most serious import for those of us who essay to teach or to learn what Christianity is. Our rôle as teachers or students of Christian theology will be worthily fulfilled; we shall succeed in erasing the stigma attaching to theological learning and escape the perils inherent in such learning in the measure, and only in the measure, in which faith in the Crucified commits us to the way of the Cross. Then as teachers and as students we shall share the fellowship of His sufferings and follow our Master in loving, humble obedience in the tasks He assigns us in the life of today. It is my profound conviction that the theology which carries forward the Reformed tradition to which Princeton Seminary belongs has a rôle of unprecedented importance to play in the world of today and of tomorrow. If we of today are faithful, the great days of this seminary are not all in the golden past.

"God needs MEN, not creatures
Full of noisy, catchy phrases.
Dogs he asks for, who their noses
Deeply thrust into—Today,
And there scent Eternity.

Should it lie too deeply buried,
Then go on, and fiercely burrow,
Excavate until—Tomorrow."¹¹

¹⁰ Translation from the Danish by Rev. Walter Lowrie, D.D.

¹¹ From the Preface to the Fifth Edition of Barth's *Römerbrief* (English Translation).

The Premises of Theology and the Task of Preaching

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

THE youthful preacher and the budding theologian have much in common as they stand upon the threshold of their life's vocations, at the first step of a Pilgrim's Progress which, they trust, shall claim them so long as strength shall last. At such a time, they can hardly do better than try to define certain essential guideposts for the way ahead—not a maximum confession of faith, the final equipment of the mature Christian minister; but rather the minimum assumptions of faith, the main outlines which should take on richer delineation with the years. Hence our theme—The Premises of Theology and the Task of Preaching.

If our "premises" take no special account of the issues of the moment, it is not through indifference to them, but because we are here prospecting a long march into a distant future. The further reaches of that course are dim and indiscernible. They are indiscernible precisely because that future is so utterly unpredictable. The truth is, no one can possibly forecast what will be the character of government, of culture, of social organization, of the Church, of civilization itself, in the half century ahead. Like Abraham of old, we are called to go forth into an uncharted inheritance, not knowing whither we go. Only men equipped for *any* future, however unexpected, however testing, can greatly serve the Church tomorrow. Can we discern premises adequate to guide both preacher and theologian through such a time? Let me suggest four.

I

The first may appear an unpromising starting-point; it is foundational for all the rest. It is—a certain insistent *tentativeness in conclusions*; a frank, indeed firm, agnosticism. To many queries—concerning the precise nature or purpose of God, the mystery of life's tragedies, the fate of our society, the nature of the future life—it is necessary to return a firm, "I do not know." Or, better, "I do not know *yet*."

This is not the attitude usually cultivated by young ministers. It is

the exact opposite of theology's traditional goal—precision in definition and finality in conclusion. Yet, it is dictated by the nature of our task.

For what is our situation in the great enterprise of apprehending God and the meaning of life in behalf of men? What is the situation of our people? We stand, all of us, whenever wisdom guides our minds to sane humility, face to face with a majestic, mysterious unfathomable Other whose dimensions we may never begin accurately to measure, whose precise nature and purpose we can never hope fully to comprehend. So Professor William Morgan wrote:

"We are held in the grasp of a stupendous reality which every moment of our lives affects us for good or ill, forwarding or frustrating our hopes and plans. That is no hypothesis and no matter of faith, but a self-evident fact which we cannot escape."

This recognition is the beginning of all true religion—as of all sound knowledge. Only a first beginning, to be sure. But it is well that, at the outset, it be deeply implanted within our consciousness. We shall never wholly escape it. Indeed, we should not wish to. For it is the secret, not only of life's ultimate mystery, but of its unmeasured promise.

This recognition determines the scope of men's knowledge of God. That there is a God, that God is, no man with true perspective (that is to say, no man in whom egoism has not swallowed up all sense of humor and so all wisdom) will ever really deny. But WHAT God is, and how He disposes the mystery of each man's mortal pilgrimage, we shall never fully understand. As Morgan goes on to say, "Our poor frail lives shrivel into nothingness at the thought of the eternities and immensities amid which we stand."

This recognition, also, denies the ideal of a neat and final theology. A foremost philosopher of our day has defined the limits of his own enterprise thus:

"The business of philosophy is, in a way, a modest one. It has to be content to recognize that in the sciences, in history, in morality and religion, it is dealing with a reality which is in the end simply 'given' and not to be explained away. It seems to follow that there can be no final metaphysics. And the temptation of all others which a student of the subject should avoid as he grows older is to have a 'system' which leaves no unexplained mystery at the root of things. It is a question whether the main service of philosophical study to the mind is not to 'liberate it from prejudices' and thus prepare it to receive illumination from sources outside metaphysics."²

¹ *The Nature and Right of Religion*, p. 4.

² A. E. Taylor, in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Vol. 2, p. 272.

If this be sound advice for the philosopher, how much more for the interpreter of faith. We may say that the *initial* task of theologian and of preacher is to free men's minds from prejudices and their spirits from uncleanness that they may receive the direct touch of the Greater Spirit upon them.

But serious questions arise. Must this recognition not drive us into silence—resolute refusal to hazard any affirmations concerning God and the things of the spirit? Not at all. Rather we must frame our confessions as competently as we can; and then, forever remind ourselves, and others, of their very imperfect accuracy and adequacy.

Does this not mean that all our assertions about God are infected with skepticism, and thereby rendered sterile and futile? Not at all. Rather, it is insistent reminder of our always imperfect, always incomplete grasp of that Being in whose hands are our destinies and whom we worship.

Does it mean, then, that our theological statements are mere symbols—merely suggestive figures without appreciable correspondence with the Reality they represent? Not at all. They are not—no more than are our descriptions of Nature—*merely* symbolic suggestions of ineffable truth; but rather incomplete definitions of partially apprehended truth.

Does this mean, again, that there is no unity within Reality itself? If we can achieve no system and no finality in our formulations, are we adrift in an ultimate relativism? Not at all. Of the profoundest theologian of this century, it was said:

"It would be a waste of time to attempt to deduce from his writings anything like a complete or systematic philosophy of religion. His thought may perhaps best be conceived as a mine, access to which may be obtained by sinking at various points independent shafts. The stratification will be found to be identical. The stuff is there all right, richly and widely distributed; but we must not be disappointed if we find it extraordinarily difficult—perhaps even impossible—to establish underground connections. Perhaps we cannot sink a shaft deep enough for that."⁸

So with our efforts fully to plumb the Divine Reality. Ore, we find—of the purest metal. And of quite unbelievable richness and variety. But we never fully discern the ultimate connections. We cannot sink a shaft deep enough.

Hesitancy in theological assertion, then, is not solely an admission of our ignorance. It is a confession of the greatness of God. As Archbishop

⁸ Algar Thorold, *Readings from Friedrich von Hügel*, pp. xii-xiii.

Temple says, "The Being and Life of God surpass our powers of comprehension. Christian theology is, in this sense, emphatically agnostic. It constantly declares that God is above and beyond our knowledge." We eschew the effort for finality, not because there is no finality in God; but because there can never be finality in men's comprehension of One whose majesty and strength so far exceed our powers of apprehension, whose beauty and grace so far exceed our powers of appreciation.

The agnosticism of theology, then, is not that of a mind which knows nothing, but of a mind aware of the limited extent of its knowledge; not of one who laments, "I do not know. I can never know anything," but of one which declares, "I do not *yet* know *this* thing. I shall never know *everything*." It holds its convictions, not with a tentativeness which expects to surrender them at any moment in the face of contradictory truth; but with the tentativeness which expects them to be caught up in, and fulfilled by, larger truth. Professor Eddington has likened advance in scientific theory to fitting together a jigsaw puzzle. Older views are not so much displaced and discarded as incorporated within a larger perspective. A patch of blue, originally diagnosed as a woman's parasol, appears later as a tiny lake, but finally takes its place within the vastness of the heavens. So, with each man's living knowledge of God.

II

Thus we are brought to a second premise—*the faith of high expectancy*—expectancy of great and never-completed discoveries. For that Reality which we seek ever more fully to know is, we believe, not only unfathomably vast, but also inexhaustibly rich.

This recognition should determine our attitude toward other Christians—and some who refuse that name, especially those whose views strike us as "arrant nonsense." It commands breadth, tolerance, catholicity in the Christian mind. Not that our neighbor may not be wrong. He well may be. But it is always possible that his "nonsense" may be just his hold on an aspect of the immeasurable richness of God which has escaped our notice or eluded our grasp. It is a standing vice of our humanity—not least in its life of faith—that it will admit no pathways to the Great Realities other than its own. It will recognize no entrance to the Divine Presence other than by the particular, often narrow, portal which has suited its own stature. It will credit no chambers within that Presence which it has not explored.

Against this vice we must guard ourselves—and others. For the solution to most, though not all, of the quarrels of theology is: “*Not ‘either-or,’ but ‘both-and.’*”

By the same token, there is, strictly speaking, no such thing as “*THE Christian life*”; there are Christian lives. There is no such thing as “*THE Christian experience*,” but rather a vast variety of contrasted but authentic Christian experiences through which a Father of infinite wisdom and affection is making Himself known with prodigal variety to His strangely and gloriously different children. This is the Alpha and Omega of all profound understanding of human nature. It is the initial guiding principle in a Christian preacher’s ministry to his people. Christianity declares that one concept only furnishes adequate categories for the interpretation of human life—that of the family relationship with its basic terms taken with the utmost seriousness. By the same token, the highest welfare and the ideal destiny of each man can be known and defined by one Vision only—that of an Intelligence at once all-comprehending and infinitely solicitous. “He loves us all as though we were but one; but He loves each one as though He loved him alone.”

It is this faith which promises growth, unexpected discovery, adventure, unending advance in the life with God. It is the secret of one of the loveliest graces—that of growing old beautifully. With how many Christians past middle life is their religion a reverie of recollection, a backward glance toward a dimly fading sunset? With some, everything dates from an adolescent conversion, a youthful commitment, a first fine careless rapture. Ask what new discoveries of God they have made in the past year; they are embarrassed to answer. It should not be so. As William James’s great study clearly revealed, first entrance into vivid and secure acquaintance with God may come, not only in youth, but at any point along life’s pathway, even at the very end. And for those who have known the reality of religion from youth there should come periodically along the way new discoveries—some, wholly unforeseen; some, truths heard often with the hearing of the ears, but now at last known within one’s own spirit. A very wise woman of my acquaintance, not given to emotionalism in religion, suggests that most of us need to be reconverted about once in three years. God’s gifts come to us bit by bit; but they come afresh unendingly.

You recall Sargent’s great mural of the Old Testament prophets. The early figures are portrayed in varied postures, mostly with heads downcast,

Hosea with face shrouded in white mantle. But, at the end, three figures stand erect and alert, eyes fastened upon the future, faces illumined by a great light from beyond. With the prophets, it was the expected Messiah who drew their gaze forward and set them aglow with expectancy. But theirs is the invariable posture of the true Christian life its whole course through—the eyes of faith eagerly expectant toward the future. The best is yet to be. God intends for us all—here and now, in this life, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow—such good things as pass men's anticipation. Then, when the final adventure looms, we may be ready with Browning's cry:

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

III

We have been speaking of the far horizons of our prospect—their mystery and their promise. These supply the wider setting for our work. But most of the time, both preacher and theologian are busied within more limited perspectives and about more mundane matters. The main task, week in and week out, is to draw men and women within an influence—so luminous as to be unmistakable, so firm as to be inescapable, so winsome as to be irresistible—which shall furnish both definite guidance and steady support for their commonplace existence. Again, many of them much of the time sail through life like a ship under generous canvas, adding more and more attractive superstructure for their souls' delight. Then the squall strikes, often out of the blue. The frail bark of life—stripped of its proud adornments; rigging, anchor, compass gone; hull rent—flounders unsure and helpless. Then distant prospects count for little. What is needed is "a very present help in time of trouble." For theologian and preacher, the great matter is not to scan the mystery at life's periphery, but to lay firm hold upon the fulcrum at the center.

None of us has serious question where, as a matter of fact, he would direct people or turn himself—in daily routine or in press of crisis—for the focal center of faith. To Jesus Christ—to the man of the Gospels, most probably; to the Christ of faith, possibly; to a Christ of inner experience, perhaps. This is our third guide-post—the *sufficiency of Christ*.

We are not concerned to argue that sufficiency in theory or to seek speculative interpretation of it. It is, in truth, the fulcrum upon which turns the whole vast structure of Christian conviction as well as the Christian's practical faith. For the essence of our certainty lies in two complementary beliefs—man is made in the image of God, so that to think of God in terms drawn from man's highest experience is, quite literally, to think of Him more adequately than in any other way; *and* in that One of our humanity in whom man's true being has come to fulfillment, God Himself is present, so that he who sees Him sees the Father also. From this dual conviction *everything* which is vital in Christian faith proceeds.

But the path by which men approach Christ is seldom theoretical; it is very practical and simple. Whither men's eyes rise instinctively in the moment of life's purest aspiration shows what their hearts really worship. Whither their minds turn instinctively in time of deepest confusion shows where they have really found wisdom. Whither their spirits reach instinctively in the hour of loneliness or defeat or disgrace shows whom they really trust. This is the revealing compass-needle of their faith. In any such circumstance, not through doctrinal orthodoxy or traditional loyalty, but through a quite unreasoned and irresistible inward compulsion, we would discover ourselves turning—to Jesus Christ. If we are less facile than our fathers in theological interpretation of Christ, this should not too seriously distress us; for of all its doctrines, this is the only one for which the Church has never achieved satisfactory statement. Indeed, the significance of Jesus Christ in the history of His Church confronts us with an extraordinary paradox—there has never been a moment in authentic Christian history when Jesus Christ has been other than the unique, the absolute, the unchallenged center of Christianity, both its belief and its life; but there has never been a moment in Christian history when Christians have been even tentatively satisfied with their interpretations of Jesus Christ. As to Christ's commanding meaning for our life, we concede nothing to our fathers. He is the fulcrum of our existence.

"Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O World, tho' thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

One specific guidepost only, in our interpretation of Jesus. The "fact of Christ"—the central and normative reality for our life and faith—is

the total impact of Jesus upon history—not merely “the man, Jesus of Nazareth,” or “the Founder of the Kingdom of God” or “the Source-spring of the Christian Church” or “the living Christ of faith” or “the Christ of inner experience,” but all of them together as phases of a single organic reality, Jesus Christ-in-the-life-of-the-world. In particular, the antithesis between the Jesus of history and the Christ of experience is a forced and unhappy one. The human career and the influence following are an organic whole. Neither can be understood apart from the other. The Christ of Christian history and of present experience should never be conceived except through the face of the man, Jesus of Nazareth. All that is truly Christ is unmistakably continuous with that life; all else is secondary accretion. There is nothing *essential* in Christian faith—*nothing*—which is not congruous with and implicit in the recorded faith of Jesus of Nazareth. But, only in the light of what Jesus became to men after His death—what, indeed, He already was to those who recorded His life—and of the influence that flowed and still flows from Him, can His life be read aright and truly understood. The “fact of Christ” is a single organic influence extending across nearly twenty centuries. It is simple truth of history that that fact is not only the center of our life and of our faith; He is the fulcrum upon which the whole of human history turns.

Wise counsel for the preacher then is: preach Jesus; preach Jesus of Nazareth. It may be that, through portraiture of Him, men may be borne along the course of His first followers—from companionship with the man of history to awakening to the Comrade within—to trusting in the Eternal Presence. For the God whom we would have men know is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And if they are to make sure of Him, it will be through deepening trust in the faith of Jesus Christ. That is not a bad definition of Christian faith—faith in the faith of Jesus. They will know God—through Jesus Christ, their Lord.

IV

We come at the end to a matter which might have been absent from our thinking not many years ago—*the necessity of the Church*.

No one who tests the pulse of contemporary sentiment can have failed to note signs of a reviving interest in the Church. For some years past, it has been possible to summarize youth's attitude toward Christianity in two phrases—steadily deepening interest in religion; steadily deepening indif-

ference to the organizations and institutions of religion. To these two characteristics, a third must now be added—a feeling out after “The Church.” Not after the existing churches as many have known them, to be sure—the Northern Presbyterian Church of western South Carolina, or the Christian Church at Miller’s Crossroad, glaring defiance across its four-corners at three other “Christian” congregations of various breeds. But after *something* which can be suggested only by the word “The Church.” “It is no accident that, certainly in the country from which I come, and as I have been two or three times assured, in this country also, the minds of students who are seriously considering the Christian faith at all, are becoming more and more occupied with the question of the Church.”⁴ Here, as always, the term to which men instinctively have recourse to voice inarticulate longing is significant beyond its obvious meaning. What is that significance?

In part, especially as it appears among the ministry, it is a frank admission of personal limitation. Modern Protestantism had tended to foster the conception of the “Big Minister” in a “big” church, thundering from a “big” pulpit final wisdom on all manner of thorny topics, historical, literary, economic as well as religious. The whole vogue of the “Big Minister”—the ecclesiastical counterpart of the Big Business Man—has gone. To the finest and most representative young men coming on into the ministry, it is without appeal. They would cast the role of the minister in humbler dimensions within the drama of that great corporate pilgrimage of the Spirit which is Christ’s Church. They would symbolize the preacher’s special contribution to worship, the sermon, as important but always secondary by moving the pulpit from its conspicuous centrality and replacing it by—communion table or cross, permanent and impersonal symbols of the true Object and Lord of worship. They would buttress their own limited gifts by extensive tapping of the Church’s accumulated stores of ritual and written prayer. This loss of self-confidence among the ministry is not without its dangers. Who would question that, in the main, it holds hopeful promise for the Christian Church?

The turning toward the Church is, in part, a reflection of the temper of the Age. In a day of mounting totalitarianism, how shall religion survive unless it achieve more effective corporate embodiment, which can, if need be, stand over against the State and every pressure of organized coercion in defense of the life of the spirit? As Canon Barry has recently written:

⁴ William Temple, *The Church and Its Teaching Today*, p. 9.

"In the face of the mighty drive toward Fascism, individual religion is helpless. Christianity can barely survive amid the intolerant blizzards of mass rule, such as threatens its existence in Europe, save as a society conscious of itself and organized by its own transcendent allegiance. Nothing but a revival of the Church can withstand the usurpations of Caesarism."⁵

And he aptly quotes the judgment of one whose perspective is certainly wholly detached, John Strachey:

"Life, with the growth of large scale production, is becoming less and less individual and more and more communal again. Thus for anyone who can achieve religious belief at all, the Catholic form of Christianity is becoming increasingly appropriate."

But there is a deeper issue here than the mere erection of one corporate agency in resistance against others, than the mere defense of "the liberty of the individual." Most of those who cry the need for defense miss that deeper issue; let it not escape us. How shall we have *spiritual* liberty, the only liberty finally worth preserving, unless we rediscover what our deeper faith has always known—there is no true liberty for anyone save in self-dedication to the fellowship of all? Here, also, there is danger—lest religion, under suasion from dominant forces in the secular sphere, create another ecclesiastical counterpart of an unsound and unworthy secular ideal; but, in the light of the deeper issue just hinted, who can question that there is essential validity in the trend?

In part, the turning toward the Church is a by-product of the renaissance of worship which is among the most unmistakable features of the contemporary scene. And the worship eagerly sought is not that of the individual in his solitariness—still, only too clearly, there is dearth of private prayer—but corporate worship, with generous use of form and ritual. This leads to the Church as the only deeply satisfying home of worship and as the treasure-house of the materials of worship.

In part, the return to the Church is a reaching out after a "Catholic Christianity." It feels impelled to seek firm grounding, not in the life of modern culture or even of traditional Protestantism, but in the rich, deep stream of cumulative certainty which has flowed down through all the Christian centuries. It wishes to find a place within that Catholic tradition and to drink deep of its wisdom and its faith. The task of the teacher of theology is not to formulate and propound "his own" theology, a "theology for

⁵ F. R. Barry, *The Relevance of the Church*, p. 51.

today," but to introduce his students to the accumulated wisdom of the Christian past, the theology of the ages; to seek so to place himself near the heart of the Christian tradition—in all its richness, its depth, its variety, its many-sidedness—that something of its overflowing wealth may find channel through his mind to lay grip upon his students, and through them upon the living loyalties of their people.

But the reviving interest in the Church has still a deeper source. It springs, in part, from a new understanding of the true nature of man and of his salvation; from a fresh apprehension of the genius of our religion. We comprehend more clearly the essentially social character of all true life of the spirit. The whole ideal of a purely personal, individual religion is self-deceived. The Christian faith can be comprehended in its fulness only by attention to its continuing life and growth and travail in the Church which is "his body." By the same token, the Christian life can be apprehended by the individual, never "in his solitariness," but only as his life is guided, chastened, strengthened and redeemed within the community of his fellows. Man may find both himself and God only within an organic spiritual fellowship of mutual loyalty and responsibility. The Church is the imperfect foretaste of the Family of God which is His ideal intention for us all.

The preacher would take his place within that great heritage. He seeks to bring the churches as they are more nearly into conformity with His intention for His Church. It is his final faith that this is also his most effective forwarding of that greater goal—until the kingdoms of this world become the Kingdom of our God, and of His Christ.

The Problem of Peace in a Dynamic World

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

IT is easy to become discouraged as to the possibility of eliminating war. There is danger of becoming too quickly discouraged. We should recall that it is only since the World War that peace sentiment has reached governments themselves and influenced them to espouse a new world system from which war would be eradicated. Until then, and through the centuries, the war system had been accepted without question. International law and practice recognized war as legal, and elaborate codes were developed with reference to the declaration and prosecution of war and defining the rights and duties of neutrals as regards the belligerents. "Peace" conferences were occasionally held. But they were designed primarily to liquidate a past war and to award to the victors strategic advantages for the next war. Even The Hague Peace Conferences of 1899 and 1907 were not designed to eliminate the war system, but rather to devise new rules of war to meet advancing technique. It was hoped that preparations for war might be made less costly, that the prosecution of war, when it came, could be made less destructive of life and property. The Hague Conferences were in essence an effort to perpetuate the war system by making it more bearable.

The World War verified what had been feared, namely, that the advance of science had enormously increased the destructiveness of war. It also demonstrated that war could not be kept within predetermined bounds, but that nations which felt their existence at stake would resort to any available means of achieving victory. Up to then, wars, while costly in life and property, had been tolerable. It now became apparent that a recurrence of war—at least a war involving great industrial nations—threatened annihilation and a destruction of civilization itself. For the first time in history, world opinion became crystallized upon the proposition that we must devise a world system from which war would be excluded.

Two major efforts were promptly made to achieve this result. By the Covenant of the League, the member states bound themselves to unite to resist any aggression by one upon another. By the Pact of Paris, the sig-

natories bound themselves to renounce war as an instrument of national policy and to settle all their differences by pacific means.

It is already apparent that these efforts are inadequate. The signatories of the Pact of Paris have not, in fact, renounced war as an instrument of national policy and the Covenants of the League have not deterred members from aggression as against each other. Discouragement results and world opinion tends to revert to its pre-war status. The war system is again coming to be accepted as inevitable. Peace efforts are losing their universality and are confined, within each country, to efforts to prevent that particular country from becoming involved in or destroyed by the next great war.

Our discouragement is premature, our abandonment of an essential objective is unjustified. It was not to have been expected that, with unerring judgment, we would have immediately found the way to change a system which had become engrafted upon the world by centuries of usage. We have made an effort; the effort is obviously faulty, but today we can profit from our mistakes while there is still time and while the need is more urgent than ever.

The change which we seek is fundamental. It is no less than the eradication of what has heretofore been a primary factor in world evolution. If we are to effect a change so fundamental, we must, I think, go back to fundamentals. What is war? It is manifestation—a violent manifestation—of human energy. The achievement of peace involves the control of such energy.

This problem of controlling energy is not a new one. Mankind has long had to deal with it in relation both to animate and inanimate forces. In the world of the physical we know that everything is in motion and that if there is any one principle of general applicability, it is that of movement and change. Everything is energized to greater or lesser degree. We recognize that there is no possibility of suppressing the dynamic forces which surround us and substituting a static world. Many forces, indeed, we welcome. They are gentle and benign and readily lend themselves to our purposes. But there are others which are violent and destructive. These we might prefer to see wholly eliminated. But we have learned by long experience that the proper procedure is not blindly to oppose and seek to suppress such forces. To attempt this merely results in a piling up and concentration of the dynamic forces until they finally burst forth with

even greater violence. In such cases we find the solution through a planned diffusion of such forces into channels such that destructive violence is avoided. The river which periodically bursts its banks we do not hold in check by a frontal dam. We go back toward the sources and canalize them so as to effect a peaceful diffusion. We have also learned that even if an appearance of quiescence can be attained, this is apt merely to mask the forces of destruction which are at work. The pond which is stagnant breeds disease. Only through motion can water be kept pure. In sum, we have learned that "peace" in the physical world does not mean a condition of quiescence, where all is static. It means a condition where alternating quiescence and violence are replaced by change which is constant and which, because it is constant, is moderate.

When we turn to the field of animate energy, we find that the same problems confront us. The problems are rendered more difficult perhaps by the fact that manifestations of human energy are even less predictable and less ponderable than those of inanimate energy. At the morning service, when our energies are replenished, we sing "Onward, Christian Soldiers" and in the evening "Peace, Perfect Peace." In our youth we are vital and keen for action; as we grow older, our energy is less abundant. There are variations which seem to depend upon racial or climatic or dietetic considerations. A condition of economic satiety often tends to diminish energy as against a condition of need which arouses to action. Even here, however, no general principles can be laid down. As with the inanimate, a condition of apparent quiescence and stagnation may in fact be breeding a human explosion, as is being currently illustrated in the case of Spain. Above all, there exist in every human being vast potential reserves of energy which under normal conditions are dormant, but which are susceptible of being called forth by psychological influences. A peaceful gathering can quickly be turned into a rioting mob. To an increasing degree, leadership goes to those who possess the art of arousing, through emotional appeal, the latent energy of their followers.

The problem faced by intelligence in appraising and seeking to control human energies, is thus one of great difficulty and delicacy. Considerable progress has been achieved, however, through the applicability of basic principles such as have proved workable in the case of inanimate forces. We can minimize the risk of sporadic outbursts of violence by devising a social system which provides channels for the current discharge of human

energy. If order is to be maintained within a State and destructive violence avoided, it can only be as part of a social system which affords an adequate daily outlet to human energy. We cannot consistently with peace deprive people of the opportunity to change their material, social and political status according to their efforts and deserts. The attempt to do this and arbitrarily to perpetuate a static situation inevitably leads to revolution. No central forces can be maintained sufficient to preserve such a rigid social order. If it is temporarily perpetuated, the inevitable outbreak, when it does come, is only the more violent and destructive. To this the French and Russian revolutions bear witness. On the other hand, if an elastic form of society is provided, then the human energies peacefully diffuse themselves. Such violence as occurs is sporadic and due to abnormalities which, under healthy conditions, are rare and of insignificant proportions. The restraints required to suppress them are well within the range of possibility.

When we turn to the world of nations, we find a surprising absence of any rational effort to maintain peace and a complete failure to apply the principles which alone have been found efficacious in every other field. We here find a world divided by artificial lines into compartments within which each nation is "sovereign." The boundaries of nations are in theory immutable and each nation has the right, which in practice is largely exercised, to convert its boundaries into barriers against intrusions from without, whether it be of goods or people or even ideas. Thus it is that the boundaries of one nation become the barriers of another. The human energies thus impounded are, as always, variable in their intensity. It may be, and often is, that the boundary barriers do not have to resist any strong pressure. This may be for any number of reasons. The energies of the people concerned may have fallen to a low ebb; the territory may be so vast or rich as in itself to give ample outlet to the energies of the population. On the other hand, boundary barriers may, and often do, confine energies so dynamic that they not only press but burst through. This again may be due to a variety of causes. It may be that a national territory is inadequate to permit of the normal expenditure of energy; it may be because the State itself has imposed a social order which does not permit of adequate internal change and thereby induces an explosion so violent that its repercussions reach abroad; or it may be because dynamic energy is aroused to an abnormal pitch by the hypnotic stimulus of political leaders.

Whatever the causes may be, it is the indisputable fact that ever since the world adopted the concept of national sovereignty, there has been a periodic recurrence of violent outbreaks through those barriers called national boundaries. The history of the world is a history of war and of changing boundaries. A constant recurrence of this phenomenon over the centuries and throughout the world should be sufficient to convince us that sovereignty, as it is usually practiced, involves an attempt to restrain dynamic forces which are irresistible.

The world has, indeed, up to the present time, been practical enough to recognize that the concept of sovereignty involved as a necessary corollary the use of violence to effect changes which will give outlet to energies and ambitions which can no longer be suppressed. This is the reason why war has heretofore been regarded as an entirely lawful procedure. This has not been because war has at any time been regarded as desirable or because the killing of human beings had been looked upon as a beneficent pursuit. War has at all times been recognized as a curse and peace as golden. However, there has been no other escape from the consequences of sovereignty. Its rigid barriers to change have had to be broken down in the only way left available, namely, by force, and consequently force has been recognized as a legitimate measure as between nations.

It may be that the world system which we thus created was the result of an instinctive choice such as we often have to make in dealing with destructive forces. It has been a pleasant thing for the favored nations to have the privilege, at least for a time, of doing precisely what they pleased within their own territory, free from the intrusion of disturbing influences from without. Even though it might be recognized, as an academic proposition, that such a situation could not be indefinitely perpetuated, nevertheless war seemed an indefinite and unpredictable eventuality, the risk of which might well be taken as against the present enjoyment of doing what one pleased without regard to one's neighbor. War, when it came, would be bad, but at least could be endured and its losses would be made good in the future as had so often been the case in the past. A regime of complete non-change, interrupted by occasional violent change, seemed preferable to a regime designed to encourage a constant, though moderate, interplay of dynamic forces.

It is from this background that we must judge the efforts for peace which have been made. With such a background we can, I think, detect

the reasons for non-success. The World War had led us to alter the choice we had theretofore made in favor of tolerating the war system. The intelligent way to change systems was to devise new channels permitting of a constant, but moderate, discharge of those energies which, under the old system, were repressed until they reached a bursting point. Actually we adopted a purely negative course. We confined ourselves to efforts at suppression, giving no thought to the provision of outlets compensatory to those violent ones we would block up.

The Pact of Paris is notable only in that it records a state of world opinion opposed to the war system. Not by an iota does the treaty change the underlying conditions which have always made war inevitable.

The League of Nations represents an attempt to secure peace by piling up forces to make national boundaries more durable and impenetrable. The member nations are pledged to apply economic or military sanctions to any nation which threatens the boundaries of another. Thus the Treaty of Peace emerged as a rededication of the nations to the old principles of sovereignty. The world would be maintained as an area cut into unchanging and unchangeable compartments, the walls of which would continue as perpetual barriers to the interplay of dynamic forces. The pledge of mutual assistance against "aggression" merely meant that the barriers might, with apparent impunity, be made the more impenetrable.

This invitation to extreme nationalism was, in fact, accepted. We have seen in every nation a striking trend toward national isolation. Emigration and immigration have been sternly restricted and largely prohibited. Great difficulties have even been placed in the way of casual travel. The movement of goods has been impeded by embargoes, prohibitory tariffs and the imposition of quotas. Superimposed upon these obstacles have been those arising from the cutting off of the monetary units from any stable relationship to each other. Fluctuating and disparate moneys have not only greatly impeded the movement of goods, but have impeded the movement of capital and have made hazardous that form of economic sharing which is represented by investments of one country in the enterprises of another. In addition to these material impediments which have been created, there has grown up a public opinion intolerant of anything foreign. "Buy American" and "Buy British" are slogans designed to discourage the international movement of even those goods which might, perhaps, surmount the multiple barriers which had been interposed. Im-

porters are looked upon with suspicion, and so-called "international bankers" are classed with traitors.

The creation of such areas of economic isolation has in turn rendered necessary a "planned economy" and a regimentation which further represses natural energies and initiative.

Nor can we ignore, in this connection, the use of boundaries to prevent the exchange of ideas and to create closed compartments of unanimous opinion. Human energy finds outlet not merely in physical exertion, not merely in striving for economic and social advancement, but equally in intellectual debate and effort at persuasion. From the standpoint of peace, the intellectuals provide the least problem. They notoriously are not men of action. They seldom agree with each other and find full outlet for their energies by seeking to persuade other intellectuals who disagree with them. Where differences of opinion are not tolerated and "subversive" ideas are banned, the problem of providing peaceful outlets for energy becomes much more difficult. This is not merely because a normal outlet is blocked, but because unanimity of opinion can be achieved only by raising emotion to so high a pitch that it overrides reason. The creation of a highly emotional state in turn raises the quantum of energy to an abnormal level.

In the light of what has thus occurred since the War, it is not surprising that we are rapidly moving into other wars. We could scarcely have found any procedure better devised to assure this. We were faced by a problem created by natural energies becoming excessive in relation to the possibilities of current, moderate diffusion. We have thereupon proceeded, on the one hand to increase artificially the quantum of such energies, and on the other hand, to block further the already inadequate possibilities of peaceful outlet.

Where then does the solution lie? A theoretical solution lies in the abolition of the entire concept of national sovereignty and the unification of the world into a single nation. All boundary barriers are thus automatically leveled. This, however, is a solution so remote that it can scarcely be expected to secure the adherence of those who seek peace as a practical objective. Our requirement is that there be sufficient outlets for human energy so that it will diffuse itself peacefully and not be suppressed and compressed within a rigid envelope until a bursting pressure is attained. What we need are safety valves cut through the barriers of boundaries. What we do not know and what we cannot accurately foretell is how

large are the apertures which must be cut in order that the dynamic forces will peacefully diffuse themselves. The counsel of perfection is to raze the barriers in their entirety. It is, however, by no means certain that such an extreme step is necessary. Indeed, the contrary seems to be indicated.

A striking example of what can be attained is afforded by the United States of America. This Union was formed by states originally exercising the same sovereign rights as any other nations, states jealous of and even hostile toward each other and desirous of building up what they hoped to be their own prosperity by a convenient usage of their boundaries to restrain intercourse with each other. Through the adoption of a treaty known as the Constitution, they found an essential basis for peace in the renunciation by each of the right to interfere with the interstate movement of people, goods and ideas. In order that such renunciation might be fruitful of practical results, they arranged to establish a single monetary unit. Subject to such renunciations, each state has retained a large measure of sovereignty. Each independently legislates as to all social, educational and religious matters. Each has its own courts and its own system of taxes—having only recently given the Federal Government the power also to impose income taxes. Legal, social, labor and material conditions have, in fact, varied greatly as between the states. Nevertheless it has become a matter of quite secondary importance where state boundaries run. It is sufficient that the resident of one state can invest his money in another or call on capital from another to finance his own investment; that he can sell goods to or buy from another and, if he chooses, travel freely back and forth and enjoy an unrestricted exchange of ideas.

State boundaries under these circumstances are still boundaries. There are many matters which those within a state can regulate to their own liking and without regard to the wishes of those in adjoining states. The independent and dissimilar treatment of these matters may often prove troublesome, as for example, when lower labor conditions in Southern states operate to destroy a textile industry in Northern states. There are not infrequent attempts by states dominant in the Federal legislature to infringe the sovereignty of the minority states. Such efforts the Supreme Court, sitting as an international tribunal, has the power to frustrate. The state boundaries, however, are not sufficiently formidable as barriers to arouse any effort on the part of one state to extend its own boundaries at the expense of another. Where, in a given state, there is found a density of

population and a high degree of energy, there also exist sufficient opportunities to project that energy beyond the state line, so that alteration of the boundary itself is no objective. There occurred, to be sure, the Civil War. This was an effort by some states to re-establish a condition under which they might again turn their boundaries into barriers against other states. They desired to withdraw from an arrangement soundly conceived to promote peace and prosperity. That, if ever, was a "war to stop war" so far as the states were concerned. If it had been admitted that any state, for any passing interest or pretext, could withdraw from the Union and re-establish itself as fully sovereign, with the customary restrictions of intercourse with others, then we would have begun a process which would almost inevitably have accentuated state boundary lines to a point where they became unduly repressive. We would have more than duplicated here the conditions which make war so recurrent in Europe.

I cite the example of the United States not as something that can be copied in its precise form by the nations of the world. This again is not practical. We can, however, draw two conclusions, one that the attainment of peace does not require us wholly to abandon the concept of sovereignty and to take all significance from national boundaries, and two, that if boundaries permit what is known in the American states as "inter-state commerce," then we have cut apertures through the boundary barriers which are probably sufficient to assure that the dynamic forces within one state will currently diffuse themselves without threatening a violent change of boundaries.

What we do not know and cannot learn without further experimentation is what *lesser* facilities for international intercourse will serve to attain the same result.

It is, however, foolish to stand passive while we debate this academic proposition. It is as though a house were on fire. Several hydrants of varying sizes are available. We know that water will put out fire, but we do not know whether we have enough water to put out this particular fire. If we value our house, we will not stop to argue or make nice calculations—we will promptly turn upon the fire all the water that we have, hoping that it will suffice.

So it is with war. We do know that war is a violent manifestation of human energy. We know that if such energies can be peacefully diffused they will not concentrate in violence. There are certain available

means for bringing about a greater peaceful diffusion of energy. Let us try these, knowing that we are proceeding in the right direction, hoping that the available methods will be sufficient wholly to eliminate war, but knowing that at least it will tend toward this result.

What are the apertures which it is practical to cut in the boundaries of sovereignty?

We must recognize, I think, that there is no uniform pattern which can be applied. We cannot treat all boundaries alike. A distinction must be made between those that enclose a highly developed and industrialized society and those which enclose areas which are as yet inadequately developed. The former cannot be suddenly exposed to new competitive conditions without serious disturbance. When a social system has been created which itself provides the peaceful outlet for a large quantum of human energy, then we would not advance our program were we to effect international changes which were so radical and abrupt as to close these domestic outlets.

This is not to suggest that there is nothing to be done by the industrial nations. There is much that they can contribute. Take, for example, the matter of international monetary exchange. We have seen how purely national moneys, which are unstable and non-exchangeable in relation to other moneys, constitute a most severe restraint to travel, the movement of goods and people, and the participation, through investment, in natural advantages and greater opportunities which are abroad. There can and should be a re-establishment of national monetary units in some reasonably stable relationship to each other. First steps toward this have, indeed, already been taken. If the progress made can be extended and consolidated, we will have done away with one of the most formidable barriers to international intercourse. There can be, in addition, some substantial removal of barriers to the exchange of goods. This is, indeed, a necessary concomitant of stable exchanges. Care must be taken to avoid economic disturbance on a wide scale. But consistently with this, international trade can be greatly facilitated by a gradual reduction of duties and elimination of quotas on selective lines which reflect the principle of reciprocity.

Immigration could doubtless be freed from some of the severer restrictions which are now imposed. This does not mean that the door should be opened to wholesale importations arranged for the purpose of securing cheap labor. Such shifts of population involve no diffusion of pent-up

energy and are to be avoided. But if immigration is left to the initiative of the individual immigrant, then it will be restricted to those of unusual energy and strength of character, for it is no simple matter to break away from an hereditary environment and move into a new land, a strange language and habits, and where one is probably not wanted. It is of the utmost importance to peace that we should avoid repression and restriction of those who possess such qualities.

Measures such as the foregoing may be taken by the highly developed industrial nations to facilitate the diffusion of energy as between each other. When we move on to those nations which are less highly developed, and particularly when we consider colonial areas, a much more ambitious program is practical. In such areas the sovereignty system is not maintained by or for the benefit of the local population. The boundary barriers do not protect a highly developed form of society which might suffer severe dislocation were the protection abruptly withdrawn. In the colonial areas the sovereignty system is imposed by the colonizing or mandatory power to the end that its nationals may have a preferential right of exploitation. There would seem to be no insuperable obstacle to opening up vast areas of the world through the application of the principles of the "mandate" system as proposed by President Wilson, namely, where the territory is to be administered in trust, first for the well-being and advancement of the local populations, and then for the benefit and equal opportunity of the whole world.

It may be that, on this basis, mandatory powers could not be found. The proper discharge of a mandate involves heavy responsibility and, often, much money. But it is more expensive to secure colonial administration at the price of closing up those areas of the world which offer a natural outlet to energies which may otherwise express themselves in war. Some form of mandatory or international administration can certainly be found which will avoid engrafting upon colonial areas the worst and most dangerous features of the sovereignty system.

If we could promptly effect changes along the lines suggested we would have greatly opened the world. Boundaries would have become much less important. We would have cut apertures adequate for the peaceful diffusion of a large percentage of the energy now repressed. Is this released percentage enough so that the remainder will not produce a dangerous tension? The danger at the moment comes primarily from those countries

—Germany, Italy, and Japan—where, on the one hand, energy is developed to an abnormal pitch by recourse to emotion and semi-hypnotic influence, and where, on the other hand, the national domain is limited in area and natural wealth.

It is not necessary to accept, in regard to those countries, the appellation "have-nots." To be sure, they do not have areas and natural wealth comparable to the British Empire, the United States, or France with its colonies. But there are many other nations having populations relatively more dense and territory less fertile. Germany, Italy, and Japan presumably do not consider their populations excessive, for they seek higher birth rates. From the standpoint of wealth, it is a serious error to consider that natural resources are all important. They are obviously a desideratum. But a population, by industry and inventiveness, can make itself a source of wealth far superior to any that nature provides, assuming (what is not now the case) that it has reasonable access to raw materials elsewhere. It is as within a state, where he who owns the coal, iron, or copper in the ground does not necessarily profit the most.

The geographical status of Germany, Italy, and Japan involves no such suppression of normal energy or initiative as in itself to make violent outbreaks inevitable. The danger comes from the coincidence of three factors, namely, (1) territory which is far from unlimited, (2) boundaries which have become serious barriers, and (3) a population which is highly energized.

It is futile here to debate where the responsibility primarily lies for the fact that these peoples have been whipped up to a highly emotional state. What is important is that a vicious circle has been created. Excessive external restraints have created unsound internal conditions, which in turn accentuate the isolation. Is it safe to open up the world, in an economic sense, to nations in the state of mind of Germany and Italy? Does the greatest assurance of peace lie in perpetuating the present difficulty which these nations have in accumulating reserves of raw material which will be adequate for a major war? Or will abnormal emotion and extreme development of "national will" subside under freer international conditions?

To adopt an analogy which is far from perfect, let us assume an average individual is subjected to solitary confinement. He becomes abnormal or at least develops anti-social complexes. Shall we release him, trusting

that with free intercourse he will again become like his fellows, or shall we keep him apart lest his anti-social traits endanger the peace?

Such problems are perplexing and no answer can be given which is demonstrably correct, except, perhaps, that halfway measures are the most dangerous. This is, in effect, the present situation. Complete isolation is impossible; war materials can be obtained; substitutes can be created; new ways of waging war can be devised which involve less dependence on materials which are unobtainable. We can perhaps immolate the patient while he still suffers from the material disadvantages incident to partial isolation. This is the theory of a "preventive" war. However, there are no candidates for the job of executioner. The task has already become too difficult. The only other solution is quickly, broadly, and generously to create freer conditions in the hope that abnormalities will then disappear, leaving a mind clear to perceive that it would be folly to use force to change boundaries through which large apertures have already been cut.

In such a program as we discuss, what role is left to the League, with its obligation on members to unite to resist any aggressor? This effort to maintain the *status quo* of existing boundaries is, as we have pointed out, not only ineffective but positively detrimental to the cause of peace if boundaries are to remain for the future the barriers which they have been in the past. What, then, is our alternative? Can we seek to make boundaries movable by providing some machinery for their being shifted to and fro? Article XIX of the League suggests this by providing for the consideration, by the Assembly, of treaties—boundary and others—which are no longer applicable and the continuance of which may endanger the peace of the world. But no machinery is set up to implement Article XIX, and it remains a dead letter. This is inevitably so, as nations are far from being ready to empower some international tribunal to hand over their territory to another.

It is, of course, sound to seek some way to mitigate the rigidity of our treaty structure. In the past, it has been usual to provide an indefinite duration for political—as distinct from commercial—treaties. The idea that any treaty can have perpetual duration is, of course, unsound, and the making of treaties in such terms establishes an artificial rigidity against inevitable dynamic forces. An alternative and preferable procedure would be to limit the duration of all treaties so that they would periodically and automatically come up for re-negotiation on their merits, in the light of then

conditions. A number of post-war treaties have been cast in this form with beneficent results.

We cannot, however, in such ways make boundaries responsive to changing conditions. Territorial changes are the most difficult form of change to achieve peacefully. There will be, from time to time, exceptional conditions permitting of territorial adjustment by negotiation. But, broadly speaking, we must assume that boundaries will remain static except as changed by war.

We are faced, then, by one of those dilemmas which calls for the exercise of intelligence. Boundaries must be either static or fluctuating. We postulate that no machinery can be provided to effect, peacefully, the relocation of boundaries. On the other hand, we are unwilling that war should remain as the instrument of change. It follows that boundaries must, generally speaking, remain unchanged in location. Up to this point the League is sound in principle in providing for a concentration of force to maintain the territorial *status quo*. But, as we have seen, this is only part of a solution. The dynamic forces in the world are too powerful to be suppressed. The energies of the different national groups are too variable to permit of predetermining for all time the adequacy of the several compartments into which such groups are to be fitted and by the walls of which they are forever to be contained.

There remains only one practical alternative. That is a program such as we propose, designed so to change the significance of boundaries that their location becomes a matter of relative indifference. If boundaries cannot be made changeable as to their location, they can at least be altered in character.

If this be done, it then becomes both feasible and right to make boundaries inviolate and to provide for some collective effort to assure this. No legitimate reason exists for the forcible demolition of boundaries, once we have cut apertures through which human energy and initiative may peacefully pass. However, even under the most ideal form of society, there are breakers of the peace, and some preventive machinery is necessary. If our society be well conceived, threats to the peace are of rare occurrence and the central force required to suppress them need not be formidable. Some assurance on this score, however, should be provided contemporaneously with making provision for the peaceful penetration of boundary barriers. For nations which hold strategic advantages will not make them common prop-

erty unless as part of a program whereby they obtain security from unwarranted aggression.

There appear to be no insuperable obstacles to the accomplishment of such a program as we suggest. The League Covenant already contains the framework for a system of sanctions. The several proposals for cutting apertures through boundaries already have strong support—not as peace measures but as steps in themselves economically advantageous. Most of the suggested objectives may ultimately be achieved, if only as a matter of slow evolution. It is inevitable that we have a reversal of the cycle of extreme nationalism through which we have been passing. But present progress is not sufficiently rapid to be good insurance against war. To achieve the necessary impetus, such measures as we discuss should be considered in terms of war or peace, rather than as abstract economic problems to be pondered and decided by experts, if and when they can agree.

Take the question of stable international exchanges versus unrelated and relatively fluctuating national moneys. There are few decisions more momentous from the standpoint of peace. Consider it, for example, in relation to Germany.

Germany cannot get foreign exchange with which to buy essential imports. Consequently—and naturally—her people feel that the natural wealth of the world is inequitably divided and should be reapportioned. To cope with the shortage of food and raw materials, it is necessary to develop a planned economy, with a high degree of regimentation. This not only blocks normal outlets for energy and initiative, but means that there must be invoked a high degree of emotion.

It is not surprising that such emotion, in an atmosphere of confinement and injustice, develops abnormalities akin to claustrophobia. This in turn leads to demands for outlets for which no logical justification exists.

In the face of such a situation, it is no mere technical problem whether nations should have unrelated moneys. It is a question of war or peace and should be decided as such.

Once the issues of international trade, stable exchanges, colonies, etc., are seen in their true significance, we will have gone far to assure progress toward a warless world.

The obstacles which remain will not be those of reason but of prejudice. Each nation counts many individuals who derive self-satisfaction from

feeling that the group of which they form part is superior to those found elsewhere in the world. The logical development of this point of view is national aggrandizement and national isolation. The sense of self-gratification grows with national prestige and the frequent occurrence of events which publicly attest such prestige. Not only do such persons desire to see their nation retain every possible advantage over others, but they desire to see such advantages consolidated and enlarged. Those who feel their national culture to be superior can very plausibly find a moral justification for its projection over others who are so unlucky as to be of a different nationality.

But it is of the essence of this point of view that it can operate only on nationalistic lines. It depends upon a personification of the State and an identification of the individual with the exploits of this fictitious entity. Thus, whatever blurs national distinctions renders the personification more difficult. Furthermore, such pride always needs exclusiveness to support it. It cannot risk the disillusionment which comes from freer international intercourse and its teaching that no nation has a monopoly of the virtues or of the vices.

The program we propose is equally obnoxious to those who, through selfishness or lethargy, would avoid contact with the problems of others. Those whose lines fall in pleasant places seek to avoid intrusion from without. It is good to be master in one's own house provided it contains all that we reasonably require for a life of ease. Selfishness, in this case, dictates the building of walls so thick that we are immune from, and pleasantly unconscious of, the troubles of the less fortunate who are without.

How are we to overcome the obstacles created by pride and selfishness? Not by negative measures. We cannot expect the elimination of these very human sentiments by a mere effort of the will, leaving as it were a vacuum. We can get rid of them only by replacing them by some sentiment more dominant and gripping and which will contain in it the elements of universality as against particularity.

This is no visionary dream. Before us today we have the spectacle of Communism and Fascism changing almost overnight the characteristics of entire peoples. Millions of individuals have been made into different and, on the whole, finer people. Elemental virtues are again treated as matters of concern. Immoralities and dishonestness, personal prides and prejudices are replaced by courage, self-sacrifice and discipline. There is a

conscious subordination of self to the end that some great objective may be furthered.

We may, on our part, question the worthiness of the objective. We may deplore the fact that so fine qualities can be evoked for the accomplishment of such inferior ends. But we cannot deny the power of the spirit.

What of the democratic nations? What of the so-called "Christian" nations? They boast of high ideals, but have they the spiritual fire with which to drive out the petty instincts which bind them to a system that spells their doom?

It is these nations which can still exercise a leadership in world affairs. It is they who above all should want a warless world, for neither democracy nor religion can thrive under the menace of war. The objective is thus one which should logically command their full support. But, unhappily, pure reason does not suffice to assure action. Reason can chart the course. It can point out what are the obstacles, the human weaknesses, that interpose. But to overcome these obstacles, is the task of spiritual leadership.

Church and State—A Relationship in Equity

NOLAN B. HARMON, JR.

THE average citizen of the United States is firmly convinced—without troubling to investigate it—that he is forever protected from anything like a State Church. Recalling somewhat hazily the Fourth of July and Memorial Day orations he has heard, he is ready to take oath off-hand that the Constitution itself guarantees that “no State Church or establishment of religion” shall ever be set up over him in this country.

But he is wrong about it. The Constitution of the United States guarantees no such thing and there are forty-seven good reasons why it cannot—every state with the possible exception of Utah. What the United States citizen is protected from is *congressional* action setting up a *Federal* or *national* church. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,” is the constitutional bar in question. The separate commonwealths, keeping all powers not specifically granted to the Federal government, retain of course their right to establish or disestablish an official religion for themselves as may seem good. In fact, the state of Connecticut had a State Church until 1818, and Massachusetts retained its establishment until 1833. (*God in the Constitution*. By R. Remp Morton, p. 90.) That the whole genius of the American people, in every commonwealth as in the nation, is now set against such a procedure, is of course admitted, and practically there is no more danger of a State Church called into being by Arkansas, Maryland, or Montana, than by the national legislature in Washington; but that these states as sovereign bodies could do this should their people so desire is an actual fact.

I

Utah alone presents the exception. When that state—or territory, as it then was—applied for admission to the Union, the question of polygamy came at once to the fore. The Mormons dominated Utah, and Utah, if admitted as a state, would be able to establish Mormonism as the official religion, with plurality of wives one of its tenets and approved practices. Representatives of other states viewed with alarm, and the halls of Congress

rang with debate. As long as Utah was a territory, Congress had the right to govern it, and blue-clad United States troopers encamped on its plains were enforcing United States law there—but what of statehood? The problem was solved by Utah itself agreeing, as a condition of admission to the Federal Union, that it would forever forbid “polygamous or plural marriages”; and that this provision should not be repealed without the consent of the United States, as well as the people of the state. So Utah was admitted.

“If Utah had been a state,” explains an authority on Constitutional law, “the Federal government would have been powerless in the premises. As much as it would outrage the sensibilities of our people to see a state permitting the existence of polygamy as a religious practice, if the majority of the people of a state so will it, they have the power to permit such a condition, or even to protect it.” Apparently, our boasted separation of Church and State is not quite so thoroughgoing as we had thought.

II

Not only has any state in the Union the inherent right to establish an official church, but the private citizen himself, under the Common Law, which antedates and is incorporated in the National Constitution, finds his daily life circumscribed by a tangle of regulatory material bearing upon his religio-civic relationship. Several sweeping court decisions since the adoption of the United States Constitution, have made it clear that there is a close alliance between the teachings of Christian morality and the powers under which we live. More than one hundred years ago Chancellor Kent of New York, in *People vs. Ruggles*, affirmed a sentence in a case of blasphemy imposing a fine of \$500 and imprisonment for three months, saying as he did so, that “Christianity is part of the law of the land”; and that “the people stood in need of all that moral discipline and those principles of virtue that bind society together” (8 *Johns* 289, 5 *am. Dec.* 335, and *Notes*). As late as 1922, Judge Burks of the Supreme Court of Appeals in Virginia, affirmed a sentence calling for a fine of \$250 for violating the Sunday law; in 1921, Judge Philbrook of the Supreme Judicial Court of Maine, in affirming a conviction for blasphemy, concurred in the soundness of the old decision of Judge Kent. Chief Justices Waite, Bradley, and Field, of the Supreme Court itself, in the famous Mormon cases decided that the standard of judgment, where religious liberty was pleaded at the

bar of the Court, is "the standard of *accepted Christian conduct*," and that "religious practices outraging this standard *will be uprooted by the law*."

"It was never intended that the (first) Amendment should be invoked . . . against . . . the punishment of acts inimical to the peace, good order and morals of society. Suppose that one believed that human sacrifices were a necessary part of religious worship, would it be seriously contended that the civil government under which he lived could not interfere to prevent a sacrifice? Or if a wife religiously believed it her duty to burn herself on the funeral pyre of her dead husband, would it be beyond the power of the civil government to prevent her carrying her belief into practice? Government could exist in name only under such circumstances." *Reynolds vs. U. S.* (1879)

Now whether this ought to be the case or not is another matter, as is also whether it shall continue to be so. Precedent in law is law, but the people are greater than their own regulations and nullify or allow to drop into disuse those provisions which they do not care to support. Something like this is happening to the Sunday law at present, and as public sentiment calls for its abrogation it will doubtless be worn away by just that much. Nevertheless, the Common Law is a great ally of formal Christian morality, and the American nation to date can almost be said to have a "favored religion," if the above legal decisions have any meaning. The Federal government puts on its official papers the date, not of its own founding, as did Rome with its *anno urbis conditae*, but of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. It puts the motto, "In God We Trust," on its coins; it has an official Thanksgiving Day in November of each year ordered by presidential proclamation; it provides chaplains for its legislative bodies, its prisons and its armies; it exempts ministers from military service, as most states do from jury duty. Its President takes oath in the Name of God upon the sacred Scriptures of the Christian people, and through these and other formal acts the American State shows that it is working hand in glove, not with one special ecclesiastical organization, but with the ethos, if not all the ideals, of Christianity. If the State does sometimes overstep the boundary and request ministers to preach for a Liberty Loan; or ask the churches to assist the Army Red Cross with funds for the battle front; or suggest that the local pulpits support whatever governmental social theory is currently being tried, it may be that the ministers should not run quite such a fever over all this as some heavily publicized ecclesiastics have done in the past.

The Church, for its part, encourages obedience to the State and to the "powers that be"; recognizes the necessity for laws and counsels observance

of them; prays for kings, princes, and rulers of the earth, in some of its more formal prayers naming them "ministers of God"; and assists good government where it may by example and precept. Both Church and State, broadly speaking, have been fair to each other in America. The writer has sometimes thought that if everything were known there has been more encroachment upon the domain of the State from the side of the Church than *vice versa*—but this is put in by way of parenthesis, not argument.

III

In contemplating the interesting question as to the future relationship between these dual powers in American life, it must be admitted that there are points where tension is occasionally felt and where possible conflict may arise.

The most serious one inheres in the overlapping, not to say inextricable entanglement, of the two sovereignties. There is no certain boundary line in life-as-it-is that may define where the jurisdiction of the State ends and the jurisdiction of the Church begins. Those who take seriously the injunction of Jesus, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's," are apt to overlook the fact that God as well as Caesar may sometimes need our pennies, and that it is impossible to serve Caesar with our tribute unless something of spiritual allegiance go with our money. Personality cannot be divided. A psychic entity is a unit. Who is to say when a thing belongs to God and when it belongs to Caesar? Pope Leo in 1885 explained ponderously that "the Almighty has appointed the jurisdiction of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine and the other over human things." (*Encyclical, "On the Christian Constitution of States."*) But though all may serenely acquiesce in the Pope's statement, all may proceed to differ bitterly in its particular application.

This has always been at the center of such public controversies as have been carried on respecting the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward the American State. Granting the right to the Roman Church—or to any church—to interfere or go into action on moral matters, *it is the Church itself which decides when this time has arrived*. If the State says that a particular public question is no concern of the Church, and the Church asserts that it is, there is a *casus belli* already in the open. If a treaty could be signed clearly defining all matters that fall under the separate jurisdic-

tions, some of this uncertainty might be removed—but this is an impossible dream. Rome has indeed signed its concordats with various temporal powers touching certain phases of mutual relationship, but no one in his right mind can imagine American Protestantism acting as a unit in approaching the tangled mass of ethical possibilities that open before it today, or that may open before it in the future. The best that can be done is to make a rough and ready division, allowing by common consent some matters to belong to the State, some to the churches. What “spiritual” question the Roman Catholic Church might pronounce to be within its purview in future no one knows, any more than one can forecast in what “moral issue” the Methodist or Presbyterian Churches might marshal their serried array twenty years from now. The frontier of jurisdiction is of necessity indefinite, and therefore debatable at numberless points.

Another area of conflict is opened up when a direct rule, law, or order of the State is taken to compermit or violate the regulations or discipline of the Church, or of an individual conscience. In American history such a situation came about during the abolition movement prior to the Civil War. Slaves as property were protected by law, but slaves as property were considered by many to be an affront to public morality and to the best interests of the Republic. Thus arose a tension between what the State maintained and what the conscience of man believed. Good men held that they ought to obey God rather than fugitive slave laws, and appealing to what they considered the higher rule violated the civil statute. Eventually national law caught up with them and universal judgment today pronounces that they were right, but the whole stormy epoch serves as an example of the possibilities of conflict between the two co-ordinate powers which we are discussing.

At present the tremendous effort the organized churches are making to oppose war and everything having to do with it provides a case in point. The State, resting upon force, not necessarily military or police but the crystallized power of the *consensus populi*—as the sovereignty of every State must do—finds itself fixed in a world where up to the present the war system has prevailed. Led by the better thought of nationals everywhere, the war idea has been slowly pushed into the background, treaty after treaty has been signed looking toward international peace, and it is to be fervently hoped that no great nation shall ever again war with another. In the event, however, that such a war does occur, there are many nationals who state that

they will refuse to participate, holding that their conscience does not permit them to bear arms with which to slay their fellow men. Thus a potential State-Church conflict impends. The American government settles this by allowing its own citizens to file private objections where there are any, and during the last war many were enrolled as "conscientious objectors." These were not compelled to bear arms, though their lot was not an enviable one. Some such policy may be looked for again in America should a future war arise. This is equitable, as it would clearly be overrunning the rights of the individual to force him into a course of conduct repulsive to his religious belief. That will scarcely be done. But, on the other hand, certain ecclesiastical leaders have occasionally failed to show an equal consideration for the rights of the State. Sovereignty in temporal affairs rests upon something more substantial than spasmodic good will, and since, *ex hypothesi*, Church and State are separate, each should allow the other some latitude in forecasting respective needs. The Macintosh case, in which the Supreme Court decided by majority decision that the United States through certain of its officers has the right to refuse citizenship to one who would not commit himself beforehand to bear arms in a future possible war, served to bring this issue to the fore. There are most decidedly two sides to this question, as the division of the highest Court showed, and it is impossible here to do more than to make reference to a single aspect of this famous case; but the bare principle, that every organized body, whether Church, State, or Aunt Dinah's quilting circle, has the inalienable right to be the judge of the qualifications of its own members, is one not to be gainsaid. The American State cannot tell the humblest crossroads church who may or may not be admitted to its membership; and neither can the churches, acting singly or together, prescribe the rules by which the nation shall confer what its people consider the priceless right of citizenship on those who come seeking it.

IV

But, it is sometimes asserted, when the churches fight for moral legislation or campaign against the big navy group, they are not acting as extraneous powers attempting to influence the policy of an alien government. They are constituent parts of the nation themselves. The churches are privileged to be heard on moral, social, and even political questions since their own existence is involved in the common weal. Church membership

does not disfranchise one, and the "moral element," it is asserted, has as much right to express itself at the polls as has the "gas-house gang" in the fourth ward, or the Republican Party in all the wards. Let the Church act—so say protagonists of this view—not as a church, but by influencing its members to apply to civic and political life its own timeless principles.

This argument is all right as far as it goes—the difficulty is, it never stops! Those who have a moment before been affirming that Church and State ought always to be distinct and separate, are now insisting that the churches are "constituent parts" of the State, "involved in the common weal." In setting the church element over against the "gas-house gang," we get the impression that the saints are more concerned with the precinct voting list than with their above-mentioned timeless principles. Certainly church members have the same warrant to exercise their suffrage as have the less altruistic members of the fourth ward gang, but no one is deceived when they piously declare that they are not thus acting as organized churches but as a private citizenry. The position is sound, but the apology for it is a clear case of side-stepping by an organization that with much better grace might have stood to its guns. Has the Church a right, on its own principles, to ask its members to do something which it will not do itself? Can it teach its children to engage in a course of conduct having to do with the public welfare but at the same time enjoin these children in private: "Keep my name out of it"? The logic of good churchmanship would seem to hold that it has not. What is right for the church member ought to be right for the Church.

On the other hand, those who resent the action of the churches in crusading for social and civic reform grow equally wild voicing their objections. They, too, start with the premise that Church and State are and ought to be separate, *ergo*, "Let the Church stay out of politics." One of the great mid-Western dailies once so far forgot itself as to declare that church members have no right to carry over into their political life the principles and tenets of belief which they receive as church members! If they do, so held this paper, the barrier is down between ecclesiastical and civic control. To this amazing declaration one of the better known religious journals aptly replied by observing that this was simply a "polite request" that the churches "get off the face of the earth."

A less rabid and better founded dissent comes from those who point out the practical effects of a church "going into politics." Curiously

enough, two quite diverse elements bring out this argument. Political bosses and public men who fear the "church vote" are always the first to shake their heads sadly over the injury such a sacred organization is about to do itself by getting "mixed up in dirty politics"; but chiming in with them can usually be detected the voices of many conservative, pious folk within the churches themselves, who hate to see their beloved Zion entangled in worldly affairs. Such persons are far more comfortable when their minister confines his remarks to the sins of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, than when he criticizes the big-navy bloc or turns his attention toward wickedness in high—and near-by—civic places. It must be admitted of course that it is a risky business for a preacher or church council to pass on the rights and wrongs of a complex public question, and fools in the pulpit have been known to cry "moral issue" over many a little partisan tempest that was then stirring the municipal teapot. But it is equally dangerous for the Church to shut itself away from life as men live it, and beam contentedly on a ministry that drones platitudes when the world is crying for moral leadership.

It is clear that protagonists of both sides run into difficulties building from the same premise. The aggressive churchman says: "Church and State are separate, but as a citizen I have my rights, and with my people I am going to help direct the destiny of my city, my state, my nation. If good people will not, bad ones will."

The political boss says: "Church and State are separate, and church people have no right, parading as 'citizens,' to act as puppets for a Church that is afraid to show its own hand. The preachers are all neck-deep in politics, and this talk of 'moral issues' fools nobody."

Each of these contradictory positions has something of validity in it, though they diverge so widely. What then? Why then it would seem the part of wisdom to go back to the fundamental postulate itself. Church and State are *not* separate in American life except in theory. Certainly they are not divided to the extent that is commonly supposed. At a thousand points, man's religious loyalty crosses the lines of his social and political destiny. For a century and a half we have indeed preserved a curious and praiseworthy equilibrium between our governmental and ecclesiastical machinery in the United States, but there never has been a clear-cut separation of the two to such an extent that the one had no concern in the affairs of the other. It is unanimously agreed that there must never be a coalescing of

the two powers, but the implications of past history and the present effect of the written and unwritten law have not been given full weight. What seems to be called for is a frank acknowledgment that while Church and State are and must be organically distinct, they are at the same time inextricably locked together in a mutual commonweal.

To recognize this condition is to suggest its solution. There are many other huge enterprises of joint co-operation or mutual responsibility which often present a similar area of indeterminate conflict-control. In fact, the legal profession has developed a vast science known as *equity*, which proposes to deal with just such matters as entangled rights, communal responsibility, *et cetera*. It is impossible here to explain the technical force of the term *equity* in its varied legal implications, but an illustration may make clear its basic meaning. We say that a city has an "equity" in a public franchise—as a water works, street railway or the like—since such concerns are "public" utilities. Their operation and well-being are of vital concern to the city itself. It cannot possibly be disinterested, and its share or concern in such utilities is recognized concretely by the law. Just what the "equity" is, is another matter difficult to determine. When courts are called upon to settle it, every aspect of each particular case under advisement is brought into the equation.

So should it be in working out an equitable adjustment between the Church—any church—and the American State. The exact amount of "interest" the nation has in its churches, or in any one individual church, is an indeterminate matter, just as is the "interest" a church has in the well-being of its overarching state. The whole relationship is one to be debated in specific application, but hardly to be denied in its larger implications. The Church has an equity in the State, and the State has an equity in the Church.

If this equitable viewpoint be adopted, while it will determine nothing with finality and may even make more difficult the badly scrambled Church-State "separation," it will give a better background for the co-operation that must prevail. It will evaluate in a frank and open manner the two—sometimes parallel, sometimes convergent—loyalties and interests involved. Equity would seem to allow those churches which have put the most into the life of their nation, to feel that they rightly have a greater share in that nation than have the whole array of little, ephemeral, home-brewed cults that arise, flourish, and die in such profusion in American life. To be sure,

the rights of every minority must be protected, but it is at this point that equity is a vigilant champion. "He that would have equity must do equity." But the majority also has its rights. When the Supreme Court decided that the standards of religious liberty, when this was pleaded at its bar, were those of "accepted Christian conduct" (par. 4, syllabus in *Davis vs. Beason*) it did no violence to protagonists of polygamy comparable to what it would have done had it ruled against the overwhelming generations of men and women who held otherwise, and who had, moreover, given their lives to carve this nation out of a wilderness. What future decisions equity shall call for, as other forces, changing faiths, and varying matters of public policy shall produce newer resultants, we do not know. It can be contended, however, that every citizen, as a just judge sitting in equity over the tangled affairs of life, must give to both Church and State, or perhaps to an individual church, a fair recognition of its inherent rights. We want no Nazi Church in America, and one that should echo the voice of government or be silenced by government would alike be tragic. On the other hand, we want no ecclesiasticism or federation of ecclesiasticisms to forget itself so far as to encroach on the secular sovereignty of the American State. That must make its own rules and see that they are enforced. What seems to be most needed is a sound knowledge of past history and of present conditions, with equity for everyone.

Character, Science, and Religion

ERNEST M. LIGON

SCIENCE as well as religion has its true and false prophets. It is a common practice today to describe almost anything new as being scientific. Probably no other word has commanded so much respect as this one. And justly so, for the method of science has made possible the discovery and application of the natural laws to achieve our modern scientific miracles. That this word, scientific, because of its influence in the minds of men, should have been used carelessly and even insincerely was inevitable. The fact is, however, that the scientific method is exacting and rigorous. A careless or partial application of its laws has never resulted in important discoveries. When, therefore, the Church wishes to apply the method of science to the problem of character, no less strict adherence to its laws is necessary. Science is not magic. It is a method of inquiry. It seems probable that through its use we shall discover methods for applying effectively the latent sources of power in Jesus' teachings in the character education of our children.

The scientific method does not create universal laws, it only discovers them and makes possible their application. Through the co-operation of the department of psychology of Union College and the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Albany, a sincere effort is being made to apply this method to the problem of character development in religious education. We believe that there are universal spiritual laws, just as there are universal natural laws. Also, we believe that when these spiritual laws are known accurately they will contain sources of power of as great magnitude as those which have been found in the natural laws of the physical universe. Furthermore, we believe that we can discover, analyze, and apply these laws by the scientific method.

Numerous inquiries have come to us from many sources and of many varieties. Some are merely curious as to what we are doing. Others want to know what we have that they can use in their own character education programs. Still others would like to participate in the experiment which we are performing. Also, there are the skeptics who remain to be convinced that the scientific method can be applied to this problem, and who

wonder, therefore, whether this is not just another high-sounding but little-producing theory of religious education or some new brand of pseudo-psychology. It is the purpose of this article to give a general answer to all of these inquiries. First, the basic principles being used in this investigation will be described. Then the possible significance of the investigation for other institutions will be described.

The basic principle of science is measurement. Science has advanced in direct proportion to the accuracy of its measurements. When the announcement is made that some physicist has discovered a method for measuring to a ten thousandth of an inch, the layman often wonders of what value it is to measure so accurately. A study of the history of science, however, will show that following every advance in the accuracy of measurement has come the discovery of new and important natural phenomena never before observable. The important discoveries of Michael Faraday which have made possible the great marvels of modern electricity might never have been made except through the medium of a galvanometer sufficiently sensitive to reveal the phenomena involved. The natural laws have existed always. Only accurate measurement reveals and makes them applicable to man's use. This is also true of character. Undoubtedly there are laws of character development. Probably no one would deny that they are still far from having been completely revealed. It seems highly probable that when we can measure with increasing accuracy the variables which constitute character, we shall discover these laws and be able to apply them to human happiness. I hold it as axiomatic, however, that a scientific investigation of character presupposes the ability to describe and measure its constituent variables with some degree of accuracy.

There are three dimensions or groups of variables which are involved in character development. It is necessary to describe each of them quantitatively if one is to be able to draw valid scientific conclusions from his data. The first one may be described as the developmental age of the individual. While usually this is related fairly closely to chronological age, some children are far more advanced than others of the same age. Also, a child often shows greater maturity in some phases of his personality than in others. This developmental age is an important term in the personal equation, and without it the equations cannot be solved. The second group is known among psychologists as individual differences. That people differ is an item of common knowledge. To know these differences accurately, and to deal

with individuals in terms of them, is a principle the neglect of which has been responsible for more personality maladjustments than any other single cause. Not the least important reason for our shortcomings in character education has been the assumption that all children fit into the same general mold, which actually fits none of them perfectly. If we are to guide personalities to anything like their maximum efficiency, we must measure individual differences, and include these measurements in our attempts to solve the personal equation. The third group of variables consists of the traits which we endeavor to inculcate in our children, and which, when they have reached their maturity, constitute character. To state these traits in objective terms, to be able to measure their growth in the individual, and to observe accurately their inter-relationships is necessary in a scientific program for developing well-adjusted personalities. Vagueness and science are mutually exclusive terms. Each of these three groups, as they are dealt with in the Union-Westminster character research project, will be described briefly.

The problem of traits is one of the most difficult in psychology. Traits there are, in great abundance. Theorists have been making lists of them from the beginning of civilization. Disagreements about them have been almost as numerous as the traits themselves. A vast majority of such lists have been prepared from only one point of view; namely, their social and ethical desirability. Nowadays we realize that another criterion must be used; that is, their adaptability to human nature. Therefore, when one's choice of traits must be psychologically as well as socially and ethically valid, the task becomes a difficult one.

Being deeply impressed with the positive nature of the teachings of Jesus, contrasting so sharply with the ordinary negative ethics of most religious and ethical teachers, the writer made a thorough study of the Sermon on the Mount to discover whether a picture of personality could be drawn, which would represent a legitimate interpretation of the teachings of Jesus and also would incorporate all that we know about mental hygiene and wholesome personality. A popular exposition of this study is set forth in book form.¹ In chapters II and III eight traits are described which we believe to be legitimate interpretations of the Beatitudes, and wholesome psychology.

One who is unfamiliar with the literature in psychology cannot possibly

¹ Ligon, E. M., *The Psychology of Christian Personality*. The Macmillan Company, 1935.

appreciate the difficulties which beset trait theories. The recent report of the Commission on Character Education of the Department of Superintendence² contains an excellent summary of this problem. It describes in some detail the shortcomings of trait theories in general, and sets forth the qualifications which a valid trait theory must possess.

A statement of objectives (in character education) should "(1) correspond to the structure of human nature, (2) point to real drives involved in conduct, (3) center attention upon the observable consequences of acts, (4) recognize the need for concrete and specific experiences, (5) take account of race experience as experience rather than as absolutes handed down from the skies, (6) induce whole-sightedness in facing moral problems and whole-heartedness in carrying out whatever seems best, and (7) stimulate the creation of new moralities in accord with our changing society."³

It is my belief that the eight traits used in this investigation fulfill all of these conditions.

While a full discussion of these traits would be far too long for the scope of this paper and must be left for a separate consideration, it seems desirable to indicate their general nature and the conditions they attempt to satisfy.

"They are subsumed under two major groups of four each. The first group consists of the traits of "Experimental Faith," the second group the traits of "Fatherly Love." Few will deny the value of faith and love in human life, nor will they deny the harm of their opposites, fear and anger. The difficulty has been in defining faith and love in terms of specific and wholesome characteristics. The nature of the faith set forth in this theory is what may be called experimental faith, which has something of the quality of the spirit of the scientist in his implicit confidence in the lawfulness of the universe. By fatherly love is meant, the parental attitude, which has been shown to be so generally powerful and wholesome in individuals and society. The more exact definition of "Experimental Faith" is found in the statement of the four traits of which it consists. The first one is "vision," the mental habit of always looking for better things and greater achievements. The second is "love of righteousness," the mental habits of always wanting to know more, both in learning information and in eagerness to discover ways of bringing about human happiness and success. The third is "faith in the friendliness of the universe," which includes the scientist's faith in the lawfulness of the universe, plus the Christian conviction that this lawfulness is distinctly friendly toward mankind. The fourth is "dominating purpose in the service of mankind." The value of purpose in mental health is undisputed. That this purpose is more healthy when it is socially oriented is likewise admitted by most students of personality. The four characteristic traits

² Department of Superintendence, *Tenth Yearbook, Character Education*. National Education Association, Washington, 1932.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 49, 50.

of "Fatherly Love" are also in accord with the best thinking in mental hygiene, as well as obviously Christian in their nature. The first is "sensitiveness to the needs of others." The parental nature of this trait is apparent, as well as its mental wholesomeness. It has been elicited in the child experimentally as early as eighteen months of age. The second is "the desire to give every man his chance at happiness and success." This is the mental attitude of what is usually called genuine sportsmanship. Its parental nature is also easily seen. The third is "the desire to resolve the conflicts within men and between men." When one considers the ravages of fear and anger in society and in the lives of men, he can see the value of this mental attitude, when it characterizes the behavior of an individual. The fourth of the characteristics of "Fatherly Love" is "the determination to serve men whether they want to be served or not." It is easy to see how often this mental attitude finds expression in the lives of parents. It is also obvious that it is one of the outstanding characteristics of great men of all times. When one considers again the dangers of anger and vanity in human personality, the character value of this trait is also obvious. As has been mentioned, these traits constitute careful interpretations of the Beatitudes as well as being mentally wholesome."⁴

The following qualifications are among the criteria used in the selection of these eight traits. In the first place, they must be legitimate interpretations of the teachings of Jesus, if they were to be used by Christian churches. It is the sincere belief of the writer that in the teachings of Jesus are latent sources of power for human personality far greater than has been realized, or than can be found in any other source. However, as all New Testament scholars well know, many interpretations can be given to Jesus' sayings. The choice between them in this case was made, not only the basis of exegesis, but also in the light of other qualifications which they must possess.

In the second place, they must be socially wholesome. Whoever said that many godly people are too inhuman pointed to an important weakness in much religious education. Most of the negative ethics which has constituted so large a part of the character education of the past has been subject to this criticism. Parents generally do not wish to make of their children over-pious and gloomy personalities. They want them to be wholesome and real and dynamic. However, not only Christians but all sincere parents will recognize in these eight traits desirable and socially wholesome attributes for their children.

A third qualification was implied in the earlier discussion of trait theories. Every human action is built on instinctive tendencies. One's instinctive

⁴ Ligon, E. M., "The Church in the Scientific Study of Character." *Sigma Xi Quarterly*, March, 1936, pp. 20, 21.

inheritance represents the entire store of his potential drives. Furthermore, when any of this latent strength is lost, the personality is less powerful than is theoretically possible in view of its inheritance. A very common fault in the negative-ethics theories of character is the frequently resultant inhibition or repression of native endowment, thus leaving a somewhat weakened as well as unwholesome type of personality;—good perhaps but not dynamic. However, the ability to utilize all of this potential inherited power is not easily acquired. Instinctive drives frequently conflict with each other. Any one instinctive drive can be expressed in many different ways. Some of these forms of expression lead to social and personality adjustment, others to maladjustment. To bring all of these drives into harmonious action is called integration. No trait theory is psychologically acceptable which does not tend toward the integration of the personality as well as social and ethical adjustment.⁵ The power of an integrated personality must be thought of simply as the sum of these drives. As one approaches perfect integration, his strength of personality seems to increase many times more than would be indicated by the power of the drives involved. Hence, the principle of integration seems to be a law which has power in itself. Then, when we find evidence that this integration is best attained by such principles as vicarious sacrifice, love for one's fellow men, vision, and faith,⁶ we begin to comprehend the tremendous potentialities of Christian education, if we can release them in our children. These eight traits, then, have been chosen in view of all that we know in psychology of the achievement of integration.

A fourth condition which had to be satisfied is a practical one. A set of traits might be described which would produce integration, but if they could not be developed in children, they would be of no value. Psychologists are in disagreement as to the nature of traits. One group believes that there are no generalized traits, but only isolated and specific habits. The other group contends that generalized traits can be formed. However, both groups agree that the most effective way to develop traits is through the formation of specific habits. For example, no psychologist believes that repeated exhortation to children to be honest will make them so. All agree that the only effective way to develop honesty in a child is to form many honest habits. The best evidence for this principle has been set forth

⁵ See Ligon, E. M., *The Psychology of Christian Personality*, pp. 11-17. The Macmillan Company, 1935.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Chapters II and III.

in the reports by the excellent work of the Character Education Inquiry.⁷ It was essential, therefore, that these eight traits should be capable of being developed by the formation of specific habits.

Finally, the development of these traits must be of such an objective character that their growth in children could be measured. There are many existing scales for measuring character traits, most of which are unsatisfactory. In their construction and testing, however, a large number of principles have been discovered by which more adequate scales can be constructed. Such a scale is now in the process of being constructed for this investigation. Undoubtedly, only after much trial and error will it be completed. Yet its construction is one of the most necessary steps in the entire investigation. Only when it is completed can we measure the success or failure of our various methods of character education, and only in proportion to its accuracy can we hope to detect the deeper-lying principles of character development.

Here, then, is the first group of variables which enter into a scientific study of character and personality. Perhaps this brief discussion of them gives some indication of how much work has been done already, and how very much more remains to be done. That we need the help of sincere parents, devoted church leaders, and thoroughly trained psychologists is self-evident.

Probably the most significant and far-reaching advances in psychology today are being made in developmental psychology. Child psychology, as it is usually called, is a somewhat misleading term. It is not so much a study of the child as such, as it is a study of the child as a growing and developing individual. Students of psychology discover that when they want to understand adults, they can best do so by studying the developmental picture. When it was customary in church schools to use the same lesson text for all ages from the kindergarten to the adult Bible classes, it was naïvely assumed that the same morals could be taught to all, by using simple language for the children and more imposing terminology for the adults. To realize actually how completely different the ideas of the child mind are from those of the adult, one needs only to make a short excursion into the experimental work of Piaget.⁸ For an adult to be able to think even

⁷ Hartshorne, M., May, M. A., and Shuttlesworth, F. K., *Studies in the Organization of Character*. The Macmillan Company, 1930.

⁸ For example, Piaget, J., *Judgment and Reasoning in the Child*. Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928.

in the same categories which characterize the mental life of the child is an extremely difficult task. On the other hand, it would be an absurdity to try to teach the child the value of vicarious sacrifice in human personality. For example, many conscientious church-school teachers overzealous about the crucifixion have instilled some very malignant fears in the minds of impressionable young children. One may teach a child successfully only in terms of the developmental age of the child. At each stage in his development certain important mental habits need to be acquired, which contribute their quota in the growth of the wholesome personality. Thus, while it is impossible to teach the principle of vicarious sacrifice to children, and not desirable to do so even if it were possible, habits can be formed even in the very first years of life which constitute a solid foundation upon which that trait can be built in more mature years.⁹ Within recent years great advances have been made in our knowledge of the growth of mental life. Although scientific developmental psychology has existed only a little more than a decade, beginning with the work of Gesell at Yale, since that time the large child research institutes at Yale, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Minnesota, Iowa, California, Vienna, and Geneva, as well as products from many other laboratories in America and Europe, have given us a well-rounded picture of the growing individual.¹⁰ In the Union-Westminster experiment, we have made every effort to apply the fundamental principles of developmental psychology to our work. The first step in this was the construction of an outline program of character development, which would show that the eight traits could be developed, and what steps could be taken toward this end at each period of the child's growth. This outline program was set forth in chart form.¹¹ This chart describes briefly the mental habits which can be formed at the various major stages of development toward the acquiring of each of the eight traits. On the basis of further study and experience with it, this chart is being revised and will be republished in booklet form as soon as possible.

It is, of course, inevitable that the major contributions to developmental psychology will come from the large child research institutes. We shall constantly need to keep abreast of their progress. On the other hand, there

⁹ Ligon, E. M., *The Psychology of Christian Personality*, pp. 82-88. The Macmillan Company, 1935.

¹⁰ Two excellent books, which are based on this work, and written for non-technical readers are:

Bühler, C., *From Birth to Maturity*. Kegan Paul, London, 1935.

Goodenough, F. L., *Developmental Psychology*. D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934.

¹¹ Ligon, E. M., *Developing the Christian Personality*, a psychogenic chart. Westminster Presbyterian Church, Albany, New York, 1935.

are many problems, for example with respect to the growth of the child's philosophy of life, which can be solved nowhere so well as in the church school. Given trained observers making systematic studies after such a method as that of Piaget, we shall discover many principles of mental development which will be of real value in the problem of character education.

Not only must the basic principles of developmental psychology be used in character education programs, but the developmental progress of the children with whom we are dealing must be measured. The earliest tests for measuring mental development were entirely unsatisfactory, but since the publication of the Binet scale of intelligence, steady progress has been made in our ability to measure accurately the various developmental functions in human personality. No phase of child psychology has been so much experimented upon as testing. Hundreds of tests for measuring all sorts of traits exist today.¹² Their accuracy varies from having a high degree of reliability to a point which is little in advance of a common sense estimate. From the beginning a healthy skepticism has existed regarding tests, one value of which has been to make psychologists more cautious in their claims for them. Tests still have far to go before they approach the accuracy of the physical sciences. However, a study made in our laboratory, as yet unpublished, shows that most parents have very little accurate knowledge of their children even with respect to the simplest functions, and that test results are much more consistent than the judgments of parents. Therefore, they are far more accurate than common sense estimates, and the most accurate measures we now have.

The Union College laboratory is equipped to give more than fifty tests of child behavior. With the use of these tests we obtain a measurement of physical growth, motor co-ordination, visual and auditory efficiency, intelligence, memory and learning ability, problem-solving ability, ability to form complex motor skills, speech, vocabulary, reading, and other language abilities, emotional stability, suggestibility, social adjustment, imaginative ability, drawing ability and art aptitude, musical aptitude, mechanical aptitude, and general personality adjustment. Not all of these functions can be measured throughout the whole age range. In fact, very rarely can we measure any one child in all of them. However, as our resources in equip-

¹² Hildreth, Gertrude H., *A Bibliography of Mental Tests and Rating Scales*. The Psychological Corporation, New York, 1933.

ment and personnel increase, we shall be able to perform this task with increasing efficiency. Last year more than two hundred and fifty children, chiefly from the Westminster Presbyterian Church School, were tested in this laboratory. In the report sent the parents, not only were the test results given but also a statement as to the reliability of each. The accompanying figure shows the form of report which was sent out for every child tested, giving his personality profile.

Such a profile is as much a picture of the individual as his physical features. To know a child one must know not only those external characteristics of form and face which distinguish him from his fellows, but also the personality features which likewise are peculiar to him. Great injustices are done to children because of a lack of this knowledge. Consider the profile shown in the accompanying figure. A boy who had these characteristics would very often be much misunderstood and unhappy. He is of medium height, fat, nearsighted, awkward and unathletic. On the other hand, he has high abilities in art and music. However, these characteristics are not generally popular among fourteen-year-old boys. Yet he is highly endowed and, given the opportunity to express his native endowments, could achieve things of creative proportions in the fine arts. Placed in the wrong situation, as he often is, this boy becomes a badly maladjusted personality. One of the chief principles applied in the Union-Westminster project is to try to discover what the native endowments of our children are and to endeavor to develop them. We do not emphasize the children's weaknesses, we try rather to develop those abilities in which they are strongest. The positive rather than the negative emphasis seems to us more wholesome and sounder psychology.

Here, then, is the second group of variables which we propose to control and measure in our attempt to study character development scientifically. It may be thought that such work must be confined to the large church school and the laboratory of psychology. This is certainly true in its experimental stages. Yet I am convinced that eventually such character education can be made possible even in the smallest rural church. This, then, is not the type of mental hygiene which seeks for malignant symptoms in children. Mental hygiene has been too much characterized by such words as "psychosis," "neurotic," "emotional instability," "mental deficiency," "complexes," and the like. We are looking for sources of power. Perhaps we may use an analogy from physical hygiene. Usually the doctor is called only when

RELIGION IN LIFE

PERSONALITY PROFILE
OFNAME John WilliamsAGE 14

| | PHYSICAL GROWTH | | MOTOR COORDINATION | | VISUAL EFFICIENCY | | AUDITORY EFFICIENCY |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Height | Weight | | | Acuity | Accuracy | |
| Highest Quarter | Tall | Heavy | | Athletic Capacity | Good Vision | Very Accurate | Excellent Hearing |
| Third Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Second Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Lowest Quarter | Short | Light | | Awkward Non-athletic | Deficient Vision | Poor Accuracy | Deficient Hearing |
| Tests Given | MEMORY AND LEARNING ABILITY CONCERN- TRATION INTELLIGENCE GENIUS AND COLLEGE LEVEL LEARNS EASILY HIGH PROBLEM SOLVING ABILITY QUICK INSIGHT SLOW TO SOLVE PROBLEMS COMPLEX MOTOR SKILLS FORMS SKILLS QUICKLY | | | | | | |
| Highest Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Third Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Second Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Lowest Quarter | Sub-Normal | | | Learns Slowly | Easy to Distract | | Forms Skills Slowly |
| Tests Given | LANGUAGE ABILITY VOCAB. & READING SPEECH EMOTIONAL STABILITY EMOTION- SUGGEST- ABILITY SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT PERSONALITY ADJUSTMENT WHOLESALE INTEGRATION ABOVE AVERAGE BELOW AVERAGE PROBLEMS IN NEED OF EXPERT ADVICE | | | | | | |
| Highest Quarter | Speaks Easily | Very Good | | Unstable | Suggestible | Makes Social Contacts Easily | Wholesome Integration |
| Third Quarter | | | | Enthusiastic | Tractable | | Above Average |
| Second Quarter | | | | Indifferent | Obtinate | | Below Average |
| Lowest Quarter | Speech Impediment | Very Poor | | Phlegmatic | Negative | Makes Social Contacts Slowly | Problems in Need of Expert Advice |
| Tests Given | ART APTITUDE IMAGINATIVE ABILITY DRAWING APPRECIATION MUSICAL APTITUDE MECHANICAL APTITUDE HIGHLY IMAGINATIVE HIGH ABILITY VERY GOOD NATIVE CAPACITY VERY HIGH CAPACITY LACKS NECESSARY NATIVE ENDOWMENT LOW MECHANICAL ABILITY | | | | | | |
| Highest Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Third Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Second Quarter | | | | | | | |
| Lowest Quarter | Very Little Imagination | | | Little Ability | Very Little | Lacks Necessary Native Endowment | Low Mechanical Ability |

Tests Given

we are ill. The athletic coach, on the other hand, takes healthy individuals and tries to increase their physical efficiency. There are, of course, children who need psychiatric attention. When we find such, we seek the aid of the psychiatrist. On our part, however, we choose the role of coach, dealing with normal personalities and endeavoring to apply to them types of training which will increase their strength of character and personality.

Finally, let us consider the last group of variables, that of individual differences. When we measure children, we learn not only the relative strength and weakness of the various functions of the individual, but also we learn the relative abilities of various individuals with respect to one another. In any normal group of individuals, one individual may excel in musical ability, another in intelligence, another have unusual art ability, one may be very athletic, and another show outstanding tendencies toward mechanical skill. Therefore, when programs are constructed for a group of individuals, these facts must be taken into consideration. All individuals, children or adults, enjoy achievement, and are happiest when their native endowments are utilized. For example, here is a boy who proved to be a difficult disciplinary problem in his group until it was discovered that he was the best artist in the group. After that he was given many opportunities to express this ability and the disciplinary troubles vanished.

To thus take individual differences into consideration is being accomplished in the Union-Westminster experiment by means of what we have called the "Drama-Type Program." Briefly, this consists in educational programs which give opportunity for expression on the part of each child, different roles for children of different abilities. Activity programs are not new in education, religious or secular. For a long time, teachers have realized that more is gained through the project method, in which the child actively participates, than in the lecture or sermon method alone. This approach, however, goes still further. Not only do we no longer commit the traditional error of seating a group of eager youngsters before us and lecturing to them on some abstract ethical principle, but we do not even have projects in which every child must do the same thing. There should not be, for example, a day for drawing, a day for wood carving, a day for singing, and so on. Every day's program should include an opportunity of expression for the child gifted in drawing, as well as for the child who is musically endowed, and so forth. This is the drama-type program. This does not mean that it is a program consisting of the production of plays,

but it is so called because it provides different forms of expression for different abilities, just as do the various roles of a drama. This principle of using children's abilities instead of worrying too much about their weaknesses is not new. The genius of Professor Charlotte Bühler in dealing with problem children is in no small part due to her practice of finding forms of activity for the child in which he has ability. Certainly the value of the work of Professor Franz Cizek, the well-known Austrian discoverer and promoter of Child Art, is due to his faith that every child has some creative ability, and to his ingenuity in discovering how best it can be expressed in some form of art. In his school some of the children draw and paint, others carve, others model in clay, and still others work with needlework. Each child finds his own best medium of expression.

Perhaps it will seem to some that this drama-type method may preclude the possibility of standardized programs. Such is not the case. To say that individuals differ is not the whole story of the principle of individual differences. Fully as important is the fact that they differ regularly. With respect to any single function in a large group of individuals chosen at random, one can predict with a high degree of accuracy the distribution of that function throughout the group. In other words, individuals differ widely; groups are astonishingly alike. Just as a troupe of actors can play almost any drama because its various roles call for the same abilities as other dramas, so in any normal group we shall find approximately the same distribution of abilities. Such drama-type programs, then, constructed for one group will fit, with very little modification, almost any other group of the same age. The construction of such programs is at present one of the major tasks of the Union-Westminster experiment. Since this drama-type method is almost unknown both in secular and religious education, it is a task for which we have very little existing material already prepared for it. However, we have made the initial trait measurements of most of the children in the school and have listed these children in each departmental group according to their several abilities. We are now ready to proceed as rapidly as material can be prepared.

Here, then, is the third and last group of variables which we must control and measure in our effort to apply the method of science to character education. Stated briefly, we know what we want to accomplish in terms of very definite goals of character development. We endeavor to form at each developmental stage those habits which are appropriate to the

mental level of that age, and which lead toward the mature traits which constitute the final aim of our whole character development program. Finally, we carry out this program by dealing with each child as an individual in the light of his own gifts and accomplishments, and not as if he were exactly like every other child in his group. It is by thus applying scientific principles to every phase of our program that we hope to develop in our children the strongest and most wholesome personalities which their native endowments make possible for them.

What significance has this investigation in the total character education problem of the Church? It should have a great deal. The time is now ripe for the Church to make a thoroughgoing effort to gain the values of the scientific method in its problem of character development. The value of the Church in human society has always depended largely on its ability to transform men's lives. When we consider the prevalence of fear, anger, hate, suspicion, greed, and lust in the world, the need of strong character for the very preservation of civilization itself is self-evident. If the Church can inspire its people with a type of faith and magnanimity which transcends these sources of social disaster, it will make its greatest contribution. In its effort to give to its youth the power inherent in the teachings of Jesus, it has employed many methods. These have not been conspicuously successful. Perhaps the application of the scientific method, best set forth by Jesus himself in the words, "By their fruits ye shall know them," will release for his followers some of the power so evident in Jesus' own life.

The history of human progress shows that important movements can arise only when prerequisite foundations have been laid. This is true in this case. The application of the scientific method to the character education program of the Church would have been impossible even twenty years ago. Some of the necessary foundations were there, but some very necessary ones have developed only within the last two decades. Here are a few of the fields which must necessarily have reached a high stage of maturity before this problem could be controlled in all of its phases. The work of New Testament scholarship has made possible a more confident knowledge of the form and meaning of Jesus' original sayings. This is essential in an effort to understand his theories of human personality. Then there are the pioneer achievements in religious education of a great many prominent educators, such as Coe, Athearn, Clark, Bushnell, and Weigle. The results of their work are indispensable to intelligent progress in the

future. The growth of educational psychology itself from the laboratories of Hall, Thorndike, Cubberley, Chapman, and others has given us a necessary picture of the learning process. The whole field of mental hygiene and abnormal psychology has made it possible for us to recognize clearly those factors which characterize mental health and mental disease. This distinction is a necessary one if we are to develop wholesome personality. Most important of all has been the phenomenal rise of developmental psychology. Both in content and method the work of Gesell, Anderson, Piaget, Bühler, Luria, and others has given us the trustworthy picture of the total developmental process of personality which is so necessary for our work. Finally, also of great importance has been the experimental work directly in the field of character, especially that of the Character Education Inquiry under Hartshorne and May, and that of the Iowa Studies in Character Research. These have shown us how the quantitative method may be applied in this field. Although this is not an exhaustive list, it is sufficient to show what the many resources are upon which we may draw in this new type of venture.

The methods and results of such investigations as this one should have general as well as specific interest for the church. Within recent years mental hygiene has shown that the scientific attitude has social and personal values quite apart from its value in approaching specific problems. The need of objective thinking in society will hardly be questioned. It is time the intelligent layman informed himself of the chief principles of scientific thinking and made them a part of his own modes of thought. An understanding of the scientific method can best be acquired by observing its application to specific problems. To see how it is applied to the problem of character should be of especial value for the broader type of problem the layman is accustomed to meet. This, then, is the first value of this study to other institutions.

If this method is the natural next step in the history of the Church's attempt to solve the problem of character, it is inevitable and highly desirable that many other churches having access to psychological laboratories, and able to secure the services of psychologists thoroughly trained in religion, will initiate investigations of their own. When they do so, however, the basic principles which have been applied in this one must be used. They will have to adopt objectives which are Christian, positive, wholesome, socially valid, pedagogically practical, based on instinctive drives, and so on. They must constantly keep abreast of the findings of developmental psy-

chology and apply these in their work. They must measure individual differences, and on the basis of this knowledge direct their instruction both toward individuals and in groups in a manner similar to the drama-type approach. They must construct measuring scales which will show their progress and provide quantitative criteria for estimating the value of different methods and principles of character education. They must use the experimental-control-group method. Any less than this would seem to involve a departure from basic principles of science and doom the project to failure before it started. The construction of such projects is the work of years of study and research. Such institutions will do well to study carefully the work which has already been done and profit by what progress has been made.

Of course, the most specific significance of this investigation for other institutions will be for those churches who may wish to participate in this particular project. Such participation involves a rigid adherence to the conditions of this project. Scientific experiments do not permit of careless and loose methods. Churches and laboratories that wish to consider doing this should make a thorough study of the nature of this project and be certain that they are willing to subscribe to all of its conditions. This is quite as important for parents as for the leaders in religious education. Character education is utterly impossible without the intelligent and whole-hearted support and co-operation of parents. In the last analysis, the success or failure of this project depends upon this co-operation.

The value of such participation will of course be reciprocal. Its value to the Church will be the acquiring of all the values of psychology and mental hygiene in its educational program. Such careful study of individual differences is of inestimable value to teachers and parents in dealing with their children. It means the use of an educational program with definite purpose, determined by the application of every pertinent field of knowledge. It means evaluation of methods and principles by scientific criteria instead of guess work. On the other side of the project, the value lies in making it possible for us to investigate more complex problems with greater reliability and more rapid progress. This can be best described by showing the chief factors which determine the extent of our progress. The three most important are leadership, experimental groups, and financial resources. It will be obvious to anyone acquainted with such investigations that the problems arising which need careful study and research are almost

innumerable. Obviously, therefore, the more trained leaders there are who are studying them, the more rapidly we can progress. Furthermore, many of these problems are so interdependent that it is highly desirable to work on them simultaneously. Yet each one may well require the full time and abilities of a trained student. This is true both of psychologists and religious educators. Furthermore, to have ministers and lay leaders who, while perhaps not technically trained, are able to see the broader aspects of such work for the Church and society is indispensable. Obviously the extent of this leadership will play an important part in the value of our work. It is not so easy to describe the advantages there are in having larger numbers of children to whom the values of this work are being given. Those acquainted with the scientific method will appreciate its importance both in the practical working out of the experimental-control-group method and in the troublesome problem of sampling. For the layman, it is sufficient to say that the application of these principles to larger groups under many types of conditions is of the greatest value in increasing the validity as well as the rapidity of progress. Finally, there is the problem of financial resources. The size and extent of our work must, of course, be limited by this factor. The extent of equipment and personnel as well as possibilities for publication of results are most important items in such an investigation. These three needs, then, leadership, possibility for wider experimentation, and financial resources, constituting as they do the limits of our work, make it desirable for other churches who have faith in our undertaking and vision for our task to join forces with us.

In this day of social and political chaos, men are wondering what the contribution of the Church to its solution can be. The Church's great responsibility is the development of strong character, able to meet the fears, angers, and suspicions of the world with courage, faith, and magnanimity. It is in an effort to secure the rewards of the scientific method for the character development program of the Church that this investigation has been undertaken. We do not anticipate quick results. We are more anxious to build solidly than swiftly. But our faith in the value of human personality and in the principles of Jesus will continue to inspire us to renewed effort and rededication of our purpose toward this goal.

Preaching and the Christian Year

HOWARD CHANDLER ROBBINS

QUITE recently the Committee on Worship of the Federal Council of Churches approved in principle an ecclesiastical calendar for voluntary use in non-liturgical churches. This may mean much or little. The Committee on Worship, while unusually representative of American Protestantism in its personnel, has no legislative powers, and is as yet not sufficiently well-known to the constituent bodies of the Federal Council to insure a hearing for its recommendations. Unless it reaches the individual minister with denominational sanctions behind it, any calendar, however excellent, is more likely to find its destination in his wastebasket than upon his desk. Even in the liturgical churches few preachers envisage their task in the spacious boundaries of an entire year; indeed, many of them do not know on Thursday what will be the theme of their sermons on the following Sunday. And in the non-liturgical churches the preacher is constantly under pressure to devote his sermon to the promotion of various charitable, civic, educational and missionary causes. These represent vested interests which will not willingly relinquish what have come to be regarded as prior liens upon his pulpit.

The makers of the calendar in question have not been unmindful of these vested interests. Some are readily assigned to appropriate places in the Christian year, as for example, the work of Bible Societies to the second Sunday in Advent, the increase of the ministry to the third Sunday in Advent, missions during the Epiphany season, and the promotion of Christian unity to Whitsunday. Others are fitted into place in the long season from Whitsunday to Advent, when sermons are devoted to the extension of the realm of God on earth in its infinite variety of manifestation. Subjects as diversified and otherwise unrelated as "Cancer Week," "Christian Marriage," "Clean-up Week," "Fire Prevention Sunday" (the reference is not eschatological), "Mothers' Day," "Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," and "Temperance Sunday" may all be subsumed under the general category of the extension of the Kingdom. The makers of the calendar propose to reduce this lush and tropical exuberance of non-liturgical vegetation to garden-like decency and order by following in a general way the traditional

calendar in use among liturgical churches, though with significant emendations.

Once before Protestantism essayed this task and did a good work. With few exceptions the revision of the calendar made by the Reformers and adopted by churches of the Anglican and Lutheran communions marks an advance in appropriateness, clarity, and evangelical content. But much that might have been done at that time was left undone through undue conservatism or for other reasons. The liturgical churches of the Reformed faith still suffer from some epistles which begin abruptly in the middle of a paragraph and close with equal abruptness in the middle of another paragraph quite unrelated to the former, so that the reading of the section as a single passage does not make sense; while on Easter Day the appointed gospels are gospels of the empty sepulcher, not of the risen Lord. If the calendar accepted in principle by the Committee on Worship commends itself to the non-liturgical churches, we may witness the undertaking of a revision which will be of interest and importance to all Christendom. The revisers will have a free hand in their selection of scriptural passages appropriate to the Sundays designated in the new calendar, and the door will be open to the freest and perhaps the most fruitful liturgical experimentation that will have been undertaken since the Reformers overhauled the Roman and Sarum missals four hundred years ago. The opportunity is inescapably significant. It is to be hoped that in taking advantage of it the Protestant churches will assist the Committee on Worship by supplying it with the aid of the ablest theologians and Old and New Testament scholars that the various denominations can provide.

Taking for granted that if the calendar commends itself to the churches it will be presented to them with accompanying suggestions of Old and New Testament sections chosen for their appropriateness to the day, it may reasonably be expected that these sections will constitute the Scripture lessons read in church by ministers who wish to follow the Christian year. And while there will be no compulsion upon the preacher to base his sermons upon them, it is not unreasonable to expect that often he will be minded so to do.

If these expectations are realized, we may look forward to a revival of expository preaching in the fullest sense, by which is meant the expounding and application of connected passages of Scripture rather than of isolated texts. Textual preaching, which is now the rule in Protestant

pulpits, is open to grave dangers. The text is frequently used as a spring-board from which to dive into deep or shallow homiletical waters, or as a peg upon which to hang the preacher's homiletical coat of many colors. A Scotch professor of homiletics remarked that a text divorced from its context becomes a pretext for the expression of some idiosyncrasy of the preacher. The story is told of a clergyman who, from whatever text he preached, always managed to educe from it the characteristic doctrines of Calvinism. One Sunday morning he announced as his text, 2 Samuel 9. 13. "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet." The congregation breathed a sigh of relief: here, apparently, was to be a refreshing variation. But alas! the preacher could no more rid himself of the ghost of Calvin than could Sinbad of the stranglehold of the Old Man of the Sea. The lameness of Mephibosheth indicated natural human depravity; that he was lame on both his feet signified total depravity; his dwelling at Jerusalem meant justification; his eating at the king's table meant adoption; and his eating there continually indicated the perseverance of the saints.

If textual preaching has its pitfalls, topical preaching, in which the preacher is left entirely to his own devices, leaves him even more sorely beset by the temptation to preach his own word and not that of God. One needs but to read the subjects announced in the Saturday newspapers to surmise what that word may be on Sunday, how hopelessly remote in many cases from the Christian gospel. Some of the topics announced are quite evidently more appropriate to political editorials or to discussion in classes in current events. Some of them indicate a desperate effort to fill half-empty churches by bizarre or sensational attractions. When a preacher announces that his subject on the following morning will be the iron bedstead of Og the king of Basan, it is evident that he might as well have announced that he would indulge in physical instead of intellectual acrobaticism in the pulpit: in fact, a few years ago there were some who did so. But at the cost of how great a fall from Paul's mighty conception of the function of preaching: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us." And how far removed in spirit from Martin Luther's saying, "It is no light thing to speak to men in the place of God."

Even when topical preaching is at its best, it suffers from a limitation which expository preaching overcomes, that of the interests of the preacher.

If he chooses his own subjects, in all probability the choice will be much narrower than when the subjects are suggested by the length and breadth and depth and height of Christian doctrine traversed in the Christian year. The writer remembers a curate who, having specialized in abnormal psychology in college, was fascinated by the perversities of the character of Balaam, and in consequence preached seven sermons in succession on Balaam. Another curate, being a good Protestant, preached eight sermons in one summer denouncing the Oxford Movement, with the consequence that when the rector of the parish returned from his summer vacation he found his congregation for the first time seriously interested in that movement and asking for a more sympathetic presentation of it. Like the children whose parents had warned them not to put beans up their noses, they were making fascinating experiments with the forbidden thing. In the following of the Christian year the preacher is never at a loss for the theme of his Sunday sermon; this theme has been selected for him by the common mind of the Church, its value and significance have been proved by generations or even centuries of Christian experience; and in preaching upon it he is conscious of entering into a world-wide and age-old fellowship of Christian preaching without in the least degree being called upon to forfeit his liberty of prophesying or his freedom of interpretation. He is not regimented, but he and his congregation are saved from the narrowing influence of his eccentricities. Saint Chrysostom, freest of preachers, preached many expository sermons; so did Robertson of Brighton.

A less obvious but no less real advantage in following the Christian year is found in the law of periodicity or rhythm. In colonial New England the theory prevailed that every sermon should present the entire range of Christian doctrine, so that if an infidel happened to be in church on any given Sunday, he would hear for once in his life the whole "plan of salvation." This could not be unfolded in less than an hour and generally required from two to three hours. It is safe to suppose that in these hasty and restless days the hypothetical infidel would make his escape in considerably less time than this. It is only in one old town in Germany that church doors are locked during the sermon, and only in a single parish church in England that a shilling is given to each member of the congregation who remains in church until the conclusion of the service. The present-day preacher is called upon, as were his colonial predecessors, to present to his congregation "all the counsel of God," but not in a single sermon.

Here is where the law of periodicity, represented in nature by the succession of the seasons, the changes of the moon, the ebbing and flowing of the tides, and the systole and diastole of the human heart, has its homiletical bearings. Religious experience is like other forms of human experience; it is subject to the influence of rhythm. It does not move with monotonous regularity, like the tick of a clock. In its progressive stages it resembles more nearly the successive movements of a well-constructed symphony. The new physics is opening our eyes to the fundamental importance of rhythm in the physical world. In their more daring speculations modern physicists are even found asserting that it is of ultimate importance, that, at least in the conventional meaning of the term, there is really no such thing as matter but only motion—what they venture to call “electric rhythms.” Be that as it may, the preacher cannot afford to neglect an aid as basic as that suggested by the rhythm of the traditional Church Year. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, do not present themselves haphazardly, as do the texts and sermon topics of the ordinary preacher. They have all the dignity, all the beauty, all the orderliness of a noble symphony, part related to part in orderly sequence and with due progression. They provide for an orderly sequence of religious instruction and of consequent religious impressions. From Advent to Pentecost there is re-enacted, year by year, the symphony of the Divine Self-Revelation, the character and purpose of the Eternal made known in the life of Jesus. From Pentecost to Advent is the season of moral instruction. Sunday after Sunday the truths of revelation are translated into terms of Christian obligation and made practical for everyday living. The Christian Year is the very systole and diastole of the Christian life: if many sermons are today anemic or suffering from arterio-sclerosis, here is the remedy!

Saint Augustine (*On Christian Doctrine*, Book IV, Chapter 16, Section 17) defined the objectives of the preacher as “to teach, to give pleasure, and to move,” meaning by the latter term to move the will to action. If the third of these objectives is to be attained, it will help if the two first are previously reached, that is, if the sermon is interesting and instructive. Not long ago a group of clergymen invited a psychiatrist to confer with them about some of their pastoral problems. In the course of the conference one of the ministers asked the psychiatrist why the ordinary congregation is so bored by the ordinary sermon. He smiled at the frankness of the question and proceeded to answer it from his own viewpoint. “The trouble,” he said,

"is that most preachers are continually telling their people what they ought to do without trying to teach them how to do it. People know what they ought to do. Telling it to them again does not help them. What would help is to have less of the hortatory element in preaching, and more religious instruction. Teach your people the techniques of religious behavior."

Expository preaching, based upon a more or less systematic following of the Christian year, will furnish this sorely needed instruction in the truths of the Christian religion and the techniques of religious behavior. In the traditional ecclesiastical calendar the former are generally derived from the Gospels and the latter from the Epistles, but in selecting passages for a new calendar there is no reason why the Scriptures of both Old and New Testaments may not both be searched for what is most appropriate and instructive. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is more appropriate to Good Friday, and more profoundly moving in its connotations, than is the traditional Good Friday epistle from the tenth chapter of Hebrews. Archaic theological concepts and forms of expression may be passed by in favor of what is timeless and eternal. The Christian of the twentieth century is not vitally interested in the doctrine of sacrifice held by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but Christians of all generations are interested in the prophecy of the Suffering Servant of God which may well have dominated the mind of Jesus throughout His ministry and which found an eternal fulfillment in His atoning death.

All of which goes to show that in selecting Scripture passages appropriate to the new calendar those responsible for the selections must sail a true and careful course between the Scylla of fundamentalism and the Charybdis of modernism. Fundamentalism is a word with specific and definite meaning. It applies to the beliefs of those whose religious convictions, whether true or not, are based upon the dogma of the verbal inerrancy of the Bible and to whom all parts of the Bible are in consequence of equal value. Modernism is also a word with definite and specific meaning. It denotes the attempt made by a group of Roman Catholic thinkers to combine an affirmation of the spiritual and religious truth of the dogmas of their Church with the claim of freedom to deny any or all of the alleged facts of history upon which the dogmas rest. The modernist contention is that what it calls "the Christian myth" will survive and do good even if its foundations in history are removed and it is left suspended in mid-air.

These conceptions should be recognized and rejected as equally unreal

in fact and equally disastrous in their consequences. In times past Protestantism no less than Catholicism has suffered from each in turn. In placing the Bible in the hands of the people the Protestant Reformation accomplished incalculable and epoch-making good. It is by no accident that the parts of the world in which today men are intellectually and politically most free, the British Commonwealth of nations, Holland, Scandinavia, Switzerland, and the United States of America, are precisely those parts of the world in which the Reformed faith is most firmly rooted. The Bible is the bulwark of defense of what Martin Luther termed the Liberty of the Christian Man as against the anti-Christian systems of thought which menace it: Atheistic Communism, which finds its Messiah in the working class; Fascism, which makes an idol of the totalitarian State and is actually Caesarism in a modern dress; and Nazism, which is tribal and divisive religion of race and blood. But, although we owe to them, under God, our political liberties, most of the Continental Reformers, less wise than Luther, accomplished incidental, unrealized, yet very serious harm by continuing to tie up the Bible with an untenable theory of inspiration. Like the Catholics, they too proclaimed the infallibility of the Bible as dogma, and interpreted this to mean a verbal inerrancy which the Bible nowhere claims for itself.

This was truly a pernicious error. It dehumanized the human authors. It reduced the conception of inspiration from a vital to a mechanical process. Worst of all, it obliterated ethical distinctions, put itself to strange shifts and evasions in the endeavor to reconcile lower with higher standards of morality, and blinded men to the progressive nature of the divine revelation, to the way in which the Divine Light dawned upon the Hebrew people while they were still in barbaric crudities of thought and life, grew gloriously brighter from age to age, and reached clear noonday in the gospel of God's incarnate Son. The fundamentalist's obscurantist attitude toward the Scriptures goes far to explain the neglect into which they have fallen in modern times. Nothing is more destructive of their just claims than a false theory of the nature of inspiration, and the modern world, which well knows that the old theory of inspiration is untenable, does not yet know how completely the responsible scholarship of the Christian Church has abandoned it. There is too wide a gap between the pulpit and the pews. The very practice of preaching from proof-texts fosters misunderstanding. Expository preaching, based upon modern knowledge of the Bible, will go far to dispel it, and restore to the Bible the moral authority which is its right.

But although fundamentalism still flourishes in sections of the country which Christian scholarship has not yet had opportunity to reclaim, on the whole it is a spent force, and the greater danger lies in modernism.

Our best defense against modernism lies in expository preaching which lays due emphasis upon the historic backgrounds of the Christian tradition. The old Roman creed, from which the Apostles' Creed developed, in its original form was merely a brief statement that Jesus was truly born, truly suffered under a specified Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, that He truly died, was truly buried, and truly rose from the dead, together with affirmations of belief in the Father and the Spirit. "Since the Christian revelation is in its very nature historical," says Evelyn Underhill¹—"God coming the whole way to man, and discovered and adored within the arena of man's life at one point in time, in and through the Humanity of Christ—it follows that all the historical events and conditions of Christ's life form part of the vehicle of revelation. Each of them mediates God, disclosing some divine truth or aspect of divine love to us. Here lies the importance of the Christian year, with its recurrent memorials of the Birth, the Manhood, the Death and the Triumph of Jesus, as the framework of the Church's ordered devotion."

The Christian religion found first its standing ground in history. Its first battle front was on the side of history against the mystery religions that had nothing to do with history and the mythological religions that were divorced from historic fact. Let the "wise," the "initiated" of these other religions say what they chose, Christians knew that they did not owe their souls' salvation to a solar myth. Nicholas Berdyaev is fully warranted in his claim that the philosophy of history emerges in the Old Testament and that consciousness of the meaning of history is a characteristic of the Christian Scriptures. Aryan religions are based upon myth, the personification of the forces of nature. Hinduism stands in contemplation before great myths that itself has fashioned. "Salvation is of the Jews." Semitism is intensely, aggressively, dramatically historical. It proclaims a God transcendent as well as immanent, who is the Creator of the physical universe and not entangled in it, who intervenes in history but is not to be identified with its processes, a God who is Lord of nature and of history alike. Before this God the Hebrew prophets prostrated themselves in reverential awe

¹ *Worship*, by Evelyn Underhill, p. 73.

and His hand was strong upon them. And Christians believe that this one, true, holy, transcendent and immanent God eventually revealed Himself in history in the man Christ Jesus, the changeless amid the changing, the point of contact between eternity and time. How warmly we should welcome historical criticisms of the records of this revelation of the Eternal in space and time! How greatly we should value the efforts of our scholars to pierce the veils which separate us from the Jesus of history, and rediscover Him!

This, it seems to the writer, is the primary task of twentieth century expository preaching. It goes without saying that it includes the application of timeless and eternal truths to the problems and needs of modern life and that to make this application sincerely and effectively will call for the preacher's best powers. In making the attempt he has the advantage of aids which were not available to his predecessors, such as some of the great modern commentaries in the Moffatt New Testament series. It is equally evident that if he wishes to preach topical or textual sermons he can do so in the six months between Whitsunday and Advent. But if for the remainder of the year he will follow the calendar and attempt expository preaching in accordance with it, if the fundamentalist will put away his fundamentalism, the modernist his modernism, and both learn humbly from Christian scholarship new insights into an eternal religion, it is possible that the churches will be unified thereby to an extent that at present appears to be impossible. That new light might yet break forth from God's Word was the hope of the pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers. The new light which would come to the churches of Christ in America from an intelligent and faithful study and following of God's Word in the orderly sequences of the Christian year might prove to be the light to point their way to ultimate unity.

The Holy Spirit in the Poets

R. BIRCH HOYLE

"THE poetic imagination," says Bergson, "has a fuller view of reality" than our own average prosaic mind possesses. Shakespeare, "the myriad minded," as Coleridge described him, knew by experience what the French philosopher guessed by intuition. For the Bard of Avon said, "Spirits are but finely touched to fine issues." "The fine issues" are missed by our ordinary thinking; the "poetic eye in fine frenzy rolling" (to use another of Shakespeare's phrases) glimpses that "fuller view of reality." It is "feeling for the ends of being out of sight," so Mrs. Brown-ing puts it, and coming into contact with ultimate Reality. Something "touches" the poetic "spirit": it sees "the light that never was on land or sea,

"The consecration and the Poet's dream,"

according to Wordsworth.

These passages suggest that from the poets we may obtain some information upon the subject of inspiration—a topic, which, together with its corollary "revelation"—is now prominent in theological discussions. For what in poetic diction is the "Divine afflatus," in theological speech denotes "the Spirit searching all things, yea, the depths of God," the "finest of all issues" that can engage the human spirit. And it may help Bible readers who find it hard to understand the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, to see how poets try to visualize and express in speech the nature and operations of the Spirit of God. Our purpose is to cull from the poets these two aspects: the subjective one of inspiration, the objective expression of the Spirit's activity. The latter has always been a problem for all artists. Helen Waddell, in *Peter Abelard* (pp. 273-4), puts the problem in memorable fashion. Abelard is seen working at a statue of The Holy Trinity. A huge figure clad in a cloak represents the Father; under that cloak are covered the Son and the Holy Ghost. Thibault, one of the monks, says, "I'll be curious to see the 'Holy Ghost.' I've never seen a likeness of Him to my knowledge, unless as a kind of bird-like!" The conventional dove but feebly expresses Him who educed order from primeval chaos, the mighty sweep of whose pinions could

carry an Ezekiel through space quicker than any seven-leagued boots! (cf. Ezekiel 3. 12-14).

INSPIRATION IN GREEK POESY

Although poetry is sometimes classified as profane and sacred, from the subjective point of view the "inspiration" is the same. The difference is to be sought in the content of what is "revealed" to the "inspired seer." From Homer downward, the Greeks held the view that communication came from the divine side to gifted mortals, the "messenger" being gods and goddesses. Thus, artistic excellence and poetic skill came through Apollo and Diana, statesmanship through Pallas Athene, warlike fury through Ares, love through Eros and Aphrodite, intoxication through Dionysius. Homer knew "the numinous" long before Otto coined that term.

"The gods, when they appear to men
And manifest their proper forms,
Are passing dreadful then" (Iliad XX, 129),

and the "coming" is expressed already in terms of "light,"

"Celestials, mantled in excess of light
Can visit unapproached by mortal sight" (Odyssey XIII, 301ff.),

centuries before the Pauline phrase "dwelling in light unapproachable" was written. When seeking "inspiration," Homer invokes the Nine Muses,

"Say now, ye Nine, who on Olympus dwell,
Muses (for ye are goddesses, and ye
Were present, and know all things:) we ourselves
But hear from Rumor's voice, and nothing know" (Iliad II, 484ff.),

and Hesiod says these Muses,

"in me breathed a voice
Divine: that I might know with listening ears
Things past and future, and enjoined me praise
The race of Blessed Ones that live for aye." (Theog. II, 26-30.)

The Greek tragedians never weary of describing how the priestesses at Delphi and Dodona become "enthused." Thus Aeschylus makes Cassandra cry,

"Woe, woe is me! Again the furious power
Swells in my laboring breast: again commands
My bursting voice, and what I speak is fate!
.
.
.
Ah, what a sudden flame comes rushing on me!
I burn, I burn, Apollo, O Apollo!" (Agam. 1214ff.)

That cry is akin to Jeremiah's: "I am full of the fury of the Lord, I am weary with holding in;" and the fire is like Jeremiah's "A burning fire shut up in my bones." (6. 11; 20. 9.) Plato studied the phenomena of "inspiration," granting that "the prophetess at Delphi and the priestesses at Dodona wrought many fine things both for private and public good when in 'frenzy,' " and of poesy he says, "a kind of frenzy and possession from the Muses takes hold of the tender and virgin soul. It arouses and inspires it by odes and other kinds of poesy. . . . Whoso knocks at the poet's door, lacking the Muses' sacred fire, persuaded that by art alone he will become a poet, comes in vain." (Phaedrus, 244ff.) In his later work, the "Timaeus" (719ff.), Plato advances the theory of inspiration that held sway for centuries, and still molds the fundamentalist view of the "plenary inspiration" of the scriptures. "No man," he said, "when in his conscious mind reaches true and divine divination, but only when the power of thought is overborne, because removed by sleep or disease or some 'enthusiasm.' But he must regain his senses to understand what he remembers was said by the divining and inspired nature in his sleep or dream and the visions he had. Then he can draw out all its meaning by reason, and tell whom it concerns of the past, present or future, good or evil. Whilst he is 'out of himself,' and so long as he remains so, he cannot estimate the things that have appeared or been said by himself." . . . Philo drew from that passage his view of inspiration, for he says that "prophetic inspiration requires the setting of the sun of reason, so that, in the darkness of the clouded mind the divine power can sweep in full force." (*Quis rerum div. haer.*, 53.)

These passages from the Greek poets and the comments of the philosophers emphasize one thing of importance when considering revelation. It is this; man must be "touched"; the movement must come to man from beyond him, he cannot induce it, for as Karl Barth and Emil Brunner unweariedly insist, if man could induce it, it would be at man's disposal, and man then would not need to be spoken to by God. Man would be "his own master." The poets, speaking out of their experience of inspiration, thus sustain these modern theologians. As Matthew Arnold well put it:

"We cannot kindle where we will
The fire that in the heart resides:
The Spirit whispers and is still,
In mystery our soul abides."

One token of inspiration is the rhythmical form into which messages,

especially in Biblical prophecy, are molded. The sister art of music plays a part in preparing the prophet's spirit, attuning it, so that the "Spirit's" message may be caught. In the case of Saul, "afflicted with an evil spirit," the strains from David's harp, "soothed the savage breast," and "Saul was refreshed and was well." (1 Samuel 16. 23.) Of David it was said, that "he was anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet psalmist of Israel," who said of himself, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." (1 Samuel 23ff.) And Elisha, when requested to give a message, bade that a minstrel be brought in, "and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him;"—that is, he became "inspired." (2 Kings 3. 15.) Even in New Testament days the form of inspired messages becomes poetic, for Elizabeth, Zacharias, and Mary, Jesus' mother, are "filled with the Holy Ghost" and burst into song. (Luke 1. 41f., 46, 67.) One sign of the Spirit's presence in the Church at Corinth, in Paul's estimate, was that members brought a psalm and he himself had the poetic lilt, as may be heard in his impassioned hymns in Romans 8, 1 Corinthians 13, and in Ephesians 3 (cf. 1 Corinthians 14. 26.) The unknown writer of "The Odes of Solomon" knew, as a poet, both the intimacy of intercourse with God, and how to express it in perfect language.

"The Most High clave my heart by His Holy Spirit,
And searched my affections towards Him,
and filled me with His love."

"As the hand moves over the harp and the strings speak,
So speaks in my members the Spirit of the Lord"

(XI, 1f; VI, 1-4.)

"I rested on the Spirit of the Lord, and the Spirit
raised me on high,

to make me stand on my feet, in the height of the Lord,
before His perfection and glory. While I was praising Him,
By the composition of my songs, The Spirit brought me
Before the face of the Lord, and, though I be a son of man,
I was named "The Illuminate," "The Son of God,"
Whilst I praised amongst the praising ones,
And great was I amongst the mighty ones."

(XXXVI, 1-4.)

SAINT PAUL ON INSPIRATION

The Apostle, in the classical passage, 1 Corinthians 2, 9-16, gives from the Christian standpoint and experience his interpretation of what "inspira-

tion" means. The three moments or elements are, first, the activity of the Spirit of God; secondly, its effects upon man; thirdly, the expression in speech of the contents of revelation. "The fine issues" that Shakespeare mentioned are "the deep things of God," things

"That no eye has ever seen, no ear heard,
that never entered into the mind of man:—"

these things "God revealed to us by the Spirit." "The unspiritual man" (as Moffatt renders "psychical") thinks these "secrets" are folly: he cannot understand them. The things are there but he lacks "the eye" to perceive them. By no effort of his own can he glimpse them: "he cannot see the reign of God." Unless there is a move from the divine side—this is revelation—the ordinary man will never know of them. The activity of the Divine Spirit removes (to use Calvin's term) "the cataract that blurs vision." Not even "the spirit of the world," Shailer Mathews' "cosmic spirit," enables him to understand the divine working and purpose. Ordinary language cannot convey their meaning; "we interpret" says Paul, "what is spiritual in spiritual language," for "the spiritual man can read the meaning of everything," for "our thoughts are God's thoughts." (So Moffatt renders the verses.)

This Pauline interpretation passes immeasurably beyond either Plato's or Philo's interpretation. There is no "setting of the sun of reason" here: there is no "seeking flight" in the irrational, as in Bergson's eulogizing of "instinct," and in Otto's "irrational" element in "The Numinous." On the contrary, a new world of things has "swum into the ken" of the "spiritual" man: he "knows," "understands," the things of God. As the hymn puts it—"God through Himself we then *do* know:" for "we know the meaning of the world as God, its Creator, knows it," "we have the mind of Christ."

One other advance on the "profane" Greek view is this. Whereas each god or goddess was assigned, in Homer and the tragedians as moving cause of some specific human endowment, art, poetry, statesmanship, administrative ability, medicine, to Paul all these are collected under the one Spirit of God (cf. I Corinthians 12). The immense enrichment of human beings within the Christian Church, their newly discovered and manifested powers, of speech, song, governmental capacity, healing ministry; all these are explainable, not by polytheism, "gods many," but by the inspiring Spirit of God.

These may appear to be extravagant claims. Hear then what one who was saturated with classical Greek literature has to say about the "new mind that became his and his fellow Christians:—Clement of Alexandria. He drops into "elevated prose" in this description:

"Being baptized we were illuminated: illuminated we become Sons: being made sons we are made perfect: made perfect we are immortal. The regenerated and enlightened one is delivered forthwith from darkness: on the instant he receives light. . . . we, the baptized, having wiped off the sins, which like a mist, darkened the Divine Spirit, possess a spiritual eye, which is free, unimpeded and full of light, by which alone we gaze: as 'initiated' on the Divine, the Holy Spirit flowing in upon us from above. The thoughts of the saints cleave not only the air, but the whole universe as well.

"And the Divine Power instantaneously penetrates the whole soul with light. He no sooner prays than he receives; he is brought close to the Almighty Power, and by his earnest striving after spirituality is united to the Spirit, through the Love that knows no bounds."

(Strom I. vi: VII. vii: 37-44.)

THE SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN POETRY

The preceding passage expresses what Christian poets experienced and the main features of the Spirit's operation, as creating life, bringing light, and evoking love. Without being theologians, none the less, the poets, through their imaginative faculty, stimulated by the Spirit, have deeply influenced theology. Victorinus Afer (circa 362 A. D.) in his hymns appears to have influenced Saint Augustine's interpretation of the Spirit's relation to the Father and the Son, within the Holy Trinity, as the Love that unites them. Victorinus speaks of the Spirit as the "connection," "the combination of the Two," "completing the circle of the Divine Being." The Father is "status," the Son "progressus," the Spirit "regressus," that is, the Father is "the Unmoved Mover," the Son is God moving out to the world and to man: the Spirit, the return in and through man to the Godhead. By analogy, Augustine deduced a trinity from love: the Lover, the Beloved, the Love uniting the previous Two.

The figure of "light" is most prominent in the poets, Adam of Saint Victor (†=year of death 1172 or 1192 A. D.) puts it, to paraphrase his Latin, thus:

"With Thee as Teacher, nothing is obscure,
When Thou art present, nothing is impure,
The mind is bright, its judgment sure."

A century later Bernard of Clairvaux tells us of his experience: "Something comes momentarily from God, and as it were, shedding with the swiftness of a flash of light, its ray upon the mind in ecstasy of Spirit." (Serm. in Canticles, 41: 3.) Saint Bonaventura, in the same period tried to express it as an experience, and drops into rhythm.

"He only knows it who has received it:
He only receives it as he longs for it:
He only longs for it whom the Flame of the Spirit,
Sent by Christ, enkindles his inmost soul.
Nature is unable to obtain it, still less effort and pursuit:
But the unction does much: little can speech do,
But inner joy does much: little even word and Scripture:
But it is altogether God's gift; the Holy Ghost."

(S. Itiner. VII)

Dante is the greatest exponent of the Holy Spirit as Light and Fire. But even he, with his exquisite mastery of speech and opulent gift of imagination, finds himself baffled. In *The Paradiso* he has visitations of the Spirit. Here is one:

"O very Sparkling of the Holy Breath! how sudden and how glowing it became before mine eyes, which, vanquished might not bear it."

(XIV, 76ff.)

In *The Banquet*, when thinking of how best to express what God is, he says,

"There is no visible thing in all the world more worthy to serve as a type of God than the Sun, which illumines with visible light itself first, and then all the celestial bodies. Thus, God illuminates Himself first with intellectual light, and then the celestial and other intelligible beings. The Sun vivifies all things with his heat . . . thus God vivifies all things with His Goodness. The Sun, pouring his rays down on this earth, reduces the things thereon to his own similitude of light according to their capacity to receive light. So, I say, God reduces this Love to his own similitude as much as it is possible for it to be compared to Him."

(III. XII. 52ff, XIV. 21-34.)

That imagery dominates all Dante's poetical attempts at describing God's manifestations as the Spirit. Listen to this:

"That which was within the Sun (i.e. God) revealeth itself not by color but by light. . . . Though I should call on genius, art and usage, I never could declare it that it should be imagined—but it can be believed. O that men longed to see it! And if our fancies are low for such loftiness it is no marvel: for no eye ever was that could transcend the Sun."

(Par X, 40-50.)

And to this exposition of the Trinity in revelation:

"That Living Light (i.e. the Son), which so outgoeth from His Illuminator (i.e. the Father) that it departeth not from union with Him, nor from the Love (i.e. the Spirit) that maketh three with them, doth of its goodness focus its ray-ing into one, as if reflected in new subsistences, eternally remaining One." (Par. XIII, 55-60.)

Heaven itself is thus decribed:

"Heaven, which is pure light: Light Intellectual full of Love, love of true good, full of gladness, gladness which transcendeth all sweetness . . . A Light there is up yonder which maketh the Creator visible to the creature who only hath his peace by beholding Him."

(Par XXX, 40-42, 100ff.)

But of heaven's glories, "not half has ever been told." Dante again and again speaks of his inability to put into words the Beatific Vision. He says,

"In heaven . . . was I, and I saw things which he who descends from there lacks skill and power to relate;
Because, when it draws near to its desire, our intellect plunges in so deeply that memory cannot follow in its wake."

(Par I, 4-9.)

And so he invokes the Spirit to aid him as a poet, aid such as the Muse of Apollo could never furnish:

"O Light Supreme, who uplifteth Thyself so far above thoughts of mortals, re-lend unto my mind a little of what then Thou didst appear, and give my tongue such power that but one sparkling of thy great glory it may leave for peoples yet to come." (Par. XXXIII, 67-72.)

Another Italian, contemporary of Dante, Jacopone da Todi, had the same difficulty of expression, although as lyrist he had a consummate mastery of language. He says of his soul,

"To a new world it is tossed . . . where love is drowned in the sea.
. . . Transformed so wondrously, By union profound and free,
. . . The Soul is joined to Thee, Endlessly, utterly,
Possessing all that is Thine, It feels what it cannot divine,
Sees what it may not discern, Grasps more than faith can learn,
Tastes God unknowingly" (Lauda CXI, I. Mrs. Beck's trans.)

Milton, England's pre-eminent religious poet, though richly dowered with the gift of the Muses, yet felt a higher inspiration needed for his

Paradise Lost. After invoking the "Heavenly Muse" that taught the writer of Genesis the story of the Creation, he proceeds,

"And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou knowest . . . what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low, raise and support:"

and again alluding to his blindness, he prays:

"Wisdom at one entrance quite shut out,
So much the rather, Thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate: there plant eyes: all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight." (I. 6-23: III. 50-55.)

Edmund Spenser, "the poet's poet," prior to Milton, had felt the need of that Spirit both for illumination and expression. He addresses Him as,

"Most wise, most holy, most almightie Sprite!
Whose kingdomes throne no thought of earthly wight
Can comprehend, much less my trembling verse
With equall words can hope it to rehearse.
Yet, O most blessed Spirit! pure lampe of light,
Eternall spring of grace and wisdomes trew,
Vouchsafe to shed into my barren spright
Some little drop of Thy celestially dew,
That may my rhyme with sweet infuse embrew,
And give me words equall unto my thought,
To tell the marveiles by Thy mercy wrought."
(An Hymne of Heavenly Love. VI, VII.)

The poet's mind, "of imagination all compact," may aid the theologian when meditating on the supreme mysteries of the Christian faith, the inner life of the Triune God and the mode of egress of the Spirit from the Father and the Son. Basil of Caesarea, in the fourth century, had used the figure of the rainbow, with its one light diffused and refracted into the three primary colors, to express the Trinity of the Divine nature. Dante took up that figure to express the Beatific Vision which crowns *The Paradiso*.

"Within the deep and clear subsistence of the high
Light appeared to me Three Circles, of Three
Colors and of one Dimension;

And the one by the other, as rainbow by rainbow,
seemed reflected, and the Third (i.e. Holy Spirit)
seemed fire which from one and the other is equally breathed.
(i.e. the Dual Procession of the Spirit.)"

The poet feels that this simile is inadequate, for he interpolates,

"Oh how scanty is my speech, and how feeble to my
conception, and this to what I saw is such that
one need not call it paltry!"

And then he rises "to the height of the great argument."

"O Light Eternal, that only in Thyself abidest,
only understandest Thyself (i.e. begetting the Logos),
and, understood by Thyself (i.e. the Son),
and understanding Thyself (i.e. the Father),
dost love and smile (i.e. the Holy Ghost proceeding from both)."
(Parad. XXXIII. 115-126.)

But nine centuries prior to Dante, the Procession of the Spirit from both Father and Son had been put into verse—in one case in a "Good-night" Hymn—by the Spaniard, Prudentius. Not the rainbow but the stream is the figure used.

"Fountain of Life that flows from out the sky,
He breathes within us Faith and Purity,
Great Conqueror of Death, Salvation's Lord.
From Him each creature life and vigor gains,
And over all the Eternal Spirit reigns.
Who cometh from the Father and the Son. . . ."

The retiring prayer runs:

"Draw near, Almighty Father, Ne'er seen by mortal eye,
Come, O Thou Word Eternal, O Spirit blest, be nigh.
One light of Threefold Godhead, One power that all transcends,
God is of God begotten, And God from both descends."

(Cathemerinon IV-2, 3; VI-1, 2.)

But usually the poets descend from these heights to the lower plains of the human need for inspiration and cleansing. The ancient Latin hymns "Veni Sancte Spiritus," "Veni Creator Spiritus" are well known in all churches, sung at Whitsun and ordination services. Somehow, poets in the northern latitudes, when singing of the Spirit, lack the warmth and fire of the sunny south. That warmth greets us in Bianco da Siena's hymn († 1434), *Discende, Amor Santo*:

"Come down, O Love Divine, Seek Thou this soul of mine,
 And visit it with thine own ardor glowing:
 O Comforter, draw near, Within my heart appear,
 And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.
 O let it freely burn, Till earthly passions turn
 To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
 And let Thy glorious Light Shine ever on my sight,
 And clothe me round, the while my path illuming."

A remarkable feature in the Caroline Poets of Great Britain (17th century), is the attention bestowed on the Holy Spirit. George Wither prefaces his *Hymns and Songs of the Church* with these words, "How meanly soever some may think of this endeavor I trust the success shall make it appear that the Spirit of God was the first Mover of the Work." So too, John Donne, Dean of Saint Paul's († 1633) sings:

"If Thy Holy Spirit my Muse did raise,
 Deign at my hands this crown of Prayer and Praise."

After a lewd, licentious youth, Donne was changed, and dedicated his poetic gift to religious ends. Here is his passionate prayer:

"O Holy Ghost, Whose Temple I
 Am, but of mud walls, and condensed dust,
 And, being sacrilegiously
 Half-wasted with youth's fires of pride and lust,
 Must with new storms by weather beat,
 Double in my heart Thy flame,
 Which, let devout, sad tears attend and let—
 Though this glass lanthorn, flesh, do suffer maim—
 Fire, sacrifice, priest, altar be the same."

George Herbert, of Bemerton, invokes the Spirit:

"Since all our music is but three parts vied,
 And multiplied;
 O, Let Thy blessed Spirit bear a part,
 And make up our defects with His sweet art!"

His contemporary, Henry Vaughan, "the Silurian," rises into victorious rapture:

"Lord Jesus, with what sweetness and delights,
 Sure holy hopes, high joys, and quick'ning flights
 Dost Thou feed thine. . . .
 Thy glorious, bright Ascension—tho' removed

So many ages from me—is so proved
 And by Thy Spirit sealed to me, that I
 Feel me a sharer in Thy Victory.
 I soar and rise up to the skies. . . .”

Herrick tells us how inconstant is the mood of inspiration:

“’Tis not every day that I Fitted am to prophesie;
 No, but when the Spirit fils, The fantastick Pannicles,
 Full of fire, then I write As the Godhead doth indite.
 What can I do in Poetry, Now the Good Spirit’s gone from me?
 Why, nothing now, but lonely sit, And over read what I have writ.”

But Herrick can put scholastic theology into verse:

“God’s undivided, One in Persons Three;
 And three in Inconfused Unity;
 Originall of Essence there is none,
 Twixt God the Father, Holy Ghost and Sonne;
 And tho’ the Father be the first of three,
 ’Tis but by Order, not by Entitie.”

More could be written about the Spirit in the Poets, but space must compel us to close. One aspect of the Spirit’s operation, that is, impelling men to social service, is best seen in Whittier, who saw the Spirit, not as a prerogative of ecclesiastical Popes and Bishops, but as working on universal man, directing energies to remove all the chains and fetters that confine man, impelling man to a love of all mankind. Two stanzas alone reveal this:

“All souls that struggle and aspire,
 All hearts of prayer by Thee are lit.
 And dim or clear, Thy tongues of fire
 On dusky tribes and twilight centuries sit.

“Nor bounds nor clime, nor creed Thou know’st,
 Wide as our need Thy favors fall:
 The white wings of the Holy Ghost,
 Stoop, seen or unseen, o’er the heads of all.”

Nearly every reformer and valiant warrior against vice, ignorance and oppression has felt impelled thereto by the same Spirit. Heinrich Heine—one of the last one would think of in this connection—has caught the mood with which the Spirit enthuses the Champions of Liberty. In his *Harzreise*, 1824, he sings to a young child:

"Now that I have grown to manhood, Read and travelled more than most:
 Swells my heart, and I acknowledge, With full heart, the Holy Ghost.
 He has wrought the mightiest marvels, Mightier works for suff'ring folk—
 He cast down the baron's stronghold, Burst for aye the villein's yoke.
 Old and deadly wounds He healeth, And restores the ancient right;
 All mankind are born His nobles, All are equal in His sight.
 Mist of evil scares He from us, Fancies dark on brains that prey:
 Sick'ning us of mirth and gladness, Grinning at us night and day.
 Thousand knights in shining armor, Of the Holy Ghost inspired,
 Chos'n His will to do in all things With great courage hath He fired.
 How their blessed swords can lighten And their blessed banners wave!
 Oh, my child, dost long to see them? Knights so noble and so brave!
 Well, my child, come, look upon me; Kiss me, boldly look, and boast:
 Then hast looked on such a Champion, Knight, child, of the Holy Ghost!"

With such a wealth of teaching from the poets, the Christians should take courage and rely more and more upon this mighty and invisible ally. Two prayers may well end this paper: one that comes from the earliest days of British history, the Venerable Bede († 735 A. D.):

"Lord God Almighty, open wide my heart, and illumine it with the grace of the Holy Ghost to seek after the things which please well Thy will. Direct my thoughts and feelings and dispose my doings to Thy commands, so that I may continually strive to fulfill Thy work and obtain the everlasting joys of Heavenly Life."

The other is inserted in several of the new hymnals:

"I feel the winds of God to-day:
 To-day my sail I lift:
 Though heavy oft with drenching spray
 And torn with many a rift:
 If hope but light the water's crest;
 And Christ my bark will use,
 I'll seek the seas at His behest,
 And brave another cruise.
 If, cast on shores of selfish ease
 Or pleasure, I should be,
 Lord! let me feel Thy fresh'ning breeze
 And I'll put back to sea."

James—Practical Mystic

CHARLES F. WISHART

I BEGIN this paper by two incisive questions. The first is this: Can any social or economic order persist without philanthropists? And I use that term not in the conventional sense of a man who might give away millions from mixed motives such as fame, ambition, or the desire to perpetuate his name. I use it in the true Greek sense. "Phileo" and "anthropos"—a lover of men. Whether rich or poor, lovers of men! One may have no worldly possessions to give away but still in the good old Greek sense he may be a philanthropist. Suppose you have an economic and political set-up which will restore and rectify the unbalanced conditions of our present order. Suppose you have an equitable balance between the brains that conceive, the wills that direct, and the hands that labor in all our great industrial enterprises. Suppose the research man and the inventor and the entrepreneur, the superintendent, the skilled laborer, and so-called common laborer, all receive their just and due proportion, and that all of this is written securely into the fundamental law of our country. Would such a condition persist without philanthropists? My own inalienable conviction is that it would not. It is a conviction drawn from long experience, from many years of pondering on history and human nature.

Every great revolutionary movement looking toward human freedom and justice is made up of mixed elements. There are those who strike out savagely, and perhaps blindly, against wrong and inequality. They have not thought much in a constructive way. They are just against something, and, it may be added, justly against something; but they are interested in revolt rather than in reconstruction. Then there is always a group of self-seeking and ambitious men who see, in a change, opportunity for personal advancement. A friend told me of a strike in a certain city where workmen, lining the pavement, shouted to an employer in an automobile, "We will throw you out, and get in that automobile and ride ourselves." That was not bringing equity between the rider in the automobile and the man on the street. It was only changing riders. Then there are those who foster revolution for the sheer love of the attendant excitement. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick used to tell of visiting an insane asylum where he saw an old lady

who could only be kept contented as they gave her pieces of calico so that she might tear them into strips. For she was happy only when she was hearing things rip! Then there will be a group—perhaps a small group—of pure-minded, unselfish lovers of men, whose motivation is not merely a blind sense of outrage or personal ambition or reckless love of excitement, but a deep and steadfast purpose to help men. On this last group the persistence and virtue of any new social order will depend. The revolting souls and the restless souls will fall by the wayside. The selfish and ambitious will try to exploit the new order by their own purposes. Only the true lovers of men will carry on toward the great ideals which all groups proclaimed at the beginning. Unless you have enough of these lovers of men, no economic set-up, however ideal, will get anywhere. The success of any order will depend on the honesty, courage, and unselfishness of its leadership, and upon the general level of intelligence in the rank and file. I would rather have an inferior economic set-up under unselfish and idealistic leadership, than a social order which was ideal on paper but was committed to the hands of ruthless, hard, self-seeking men. I think there is a fallacy in the idea that you can eliminate the profit motive, whatever you may do with that profit motive in terms of money. It will persist in the desire for power and fame and ease. Stalin and Hitler and Mussolini control more millions than any man in America. If such men, or their successors, are not lovers of men they may make personal profit, in the form of fame and power, their God, under any economic order. As time goes on, and the first fine enthusiasms fade out of any new movement for the betterment of the common man, these innate selfish tendencies of leadership will more and more assert themselves to the undoing of all previous gains. This has been the obvious lesson of history. The permanent results of any revolution have been almost exactly proportioned to the number of high-minded men in its leadership who have been, in a true sense, lovers of men.

The second crucial question is this: Can you have philanthropists without religion? I do not mean for the time being. I do not mean through a generation, or two or three generations. I do mean that when you take the range of the long, long centuries, and when you deprive men of the things which religion gives them—morality rooted in an eternal world, belief in worship and prayer, the sense of an intelligent moral order, a moral order that is grounded in something more than mere expediency—you face

a tragic query. Can you freeze men up in materialism, dialectical or any other sort; take out of them the sense that life has a permanent meaning and that they have a destiny greater than that of the worm or the fly, and still keep philanthropists, lovers of men, to furnish the leadership of your social order? Again, my intense and burning conviction is in the negative. You cannot maintain lovers of men if the love of the Eternal dies out of their hearts. We hear much of the so-called humanism, that humanism which relegates as outmoded the cry of the Psalmist, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." There is nothing in this universe, they tell us, higher than a man. But the humanist paradox is that the highest things in men have come to them through the belief that there was something higher than themselves. As Professor William James used to put it, "The best things of religion are the best things that history has to offer." The gentlemen who set up a mirror instead of an altar, who bid us look to ourselves and say, "These be thy gods, O Israel," forget that if men had never looked to anything higher than themselves, they would be, today, little better than the beasts of the field. "*O anthropos*," said the Greek about man—"the upward-looking one!" He looked above himself and, therefore, became great.

This is not to deny that there are philanthropists today, real lovers of men, who apparently have no religion. For the time being, the love of humanity has displaced the love of God. This is true in Russia where a rotten Church, tied up with a tyrannical empire, has so disgusted men with the way in which religion was presented, that they have thrown it overboard, bag and baggage. But look at that experiment not for a single generation. Follow it on through the centuries, and you will find that the mirror can never be a permanent altar. Much has been accomplished by the Soviets for the betterment of the common man. Yet, in the long run, and through the generations, unless its leadership rises higher than materialism and mechanism, that experiment will go down to failure and disaster because, in its leadership, it cannot maintain lovers of men.

For, viewed in and of themselves, unless you look at them under the species of eternity, the run-of-mine human output is somewhat unlovely. It is hard to keep on loving men with their narrowness and their banalities, their selfishness and their trivialities, unless you have an eternal motive. "Forty million people, mostly fools," growled Carlyle, of his contemporary England. "The more I see of men, the more I think of dogs," runs the

popular cliché. "I could be proud of my country," said Sir Horace Walpole, "if it were not for my countrymen." When Richard Wagner was planning his theatre at Bayreuth, an alteration was suggested which would give more seating space. "More room for the pigs," said Wagner. I make bold to assert that it is only an eternal motivation which can lift one out of that easy cynicism about man. It is only when you do view him under the species of eternity in the light of his undeveloped potentialities—potentialities which may take ages of future spiritual evolution to develop—that you can really become a philanthropist. Put him over against the background of a brief, meaningless, little span of years—no eternal thought back of him, no eternal destiny ahead of him—and you will not, through the generations and centuries, maintain lovers of man. Those we have now, apparently without the religious motive, are like the night-blooming cereus. Their lives blossom in the darkness of unbelief, but their roots were warmed by the sunshine of Christian faith in the lives of their forebears. Philanthropy, as we now know it, is essentially a Christian virtue. There were, of course, lovers of men before the historic Christ, like Hosea and Amos and Isaiah, but they were v. c. Christians. They saw His day and were glad. And our modern philanthropists who have cut loose from Christianity, cannot cut loose from the centuries of Christian heredity and environment which have made them what they are.

Moreover, the case becomes still more convincing when we consider that what we see in men depends, largely, on what we have in ourselves. Deep compassion and fine understanding, sympathy, insight, charity—these are the things which Jesus Christ puts into a man, and, without these, he cannot, in the long run, remain a philanthropist. Schweitzer loved Bach and science and New Testament criticism until Christ came and touched him. Then he began to love men—yes, the degraded, bestial savage, to whom he gave his life. As Michael Angelo laughed when he saw the block of rough marble, thinking of the beautiful angel which his skilled hand would bring out of it, so the lover of the Lord becomes a lover of the crudest form in which humanity reveals itself, because he knows that what Christ has done in him, He can, in like manner, do with the poorest and the meanest of his fellowmen.

I have, of late, been rereading the book of James. It is an amazing challenge on behalf of what we now call the social gospel. Old Martin Luther did not think much of it. "*Ein stroheim epistel*"—"a right strawy

epistle"—he said. His was something of the same contempt which certain smug preachers of the "God of things as they are," pour out upon prophets like Josiah Strong, Washington Gladden, Walter Rauschenbusch, and the later flaming evangelists of a better social order. James had a fine contempt for castes and a glorious passion for human brotherhood. No communist propaganda ever called the rich by harder names. Neither Charles Clayton Morrison nor John Haynes Holmes nor Francis J. McConnell ever sounded a more aggressive note on behalf of the practical applications of Christianity, the betterment of the industrial order, the relation between wars and economic selfishness, the development of interracial fellowship, the passionate defense of the exploited as over against the exploiter. But the amazing thing about this book is that its ultra-practical character is rooted down into a profound mysticism, that the love of men is grounded deep in the awareness of God, that philanthropy has its rock foundation in theism.

When, for instance, we turn to James's doctrine of prayer, we realize the depth and far-reaching implications of his spiritual intuitions. Consider his implicit belief in the healing power of faith. The prayer of faith heals the sick, he declares. Let us not whittle that statement down, or accommodate it to the basis of our little faith and small vision. Of course the so-called idea of "faith-healing" has been pitifully misused. It should never justify the neglect of any possible means which the best physicians can furnish to assist nature in her great task of healing. When we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we have abundant New Testament warrant in adding to that saying, "Get to work and earn your daily bread." "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." That is a paradox, but we must accept it. I have seen so-called faith healers who are fakers, and I once knew a man—a preacher, at that—long years ago, who denounced physicians, decried the use of medicines and insisted on trusting God, while he lived a life of comparative idleness and his wife and children starved. James would have had nothing to do with that kind of faith healing. When he advises the anointing of the sick with oil, I presume that was less of a therapeutic agency than as a solemn ritual, just as when we take the communion to the sick. God sends us good physicians and has provided, in the great pharmacopoeia of nature, specific remedies for specific diseases. It would be unfaith not to use these. But over and above all human agencies, James asserts a definite power of the spiritual over the physical.

His doctrine of prayer is curiously daring. He does not so much think of it as a connecting wire to the divine dynamo, but as the unloosing of the dynamo which we have in ourselves, the freeing of our own psychic power, so that the exercise of true prayer in the bold sense of fellowship with the Eternal One involves a twofold process. In it we lay hold of God's power, but also in it we unloose our own personal dynamics, we add them to the sum total of spiritual forces in the universe, and they become causes producing effects just as any other cause, either physical or spiritual, produces its fitting effect. The prayer of a righteous man, he alleges, is "exceedingly powerful in its efficiency."

Before the reader relegates that doctrine as an outmoded vestige of superstition coming down to us from a childlike age, let us look at it seriously in the light of modern science. During the past year there came to my desk, at about the same time, three writings from eminent contemporary scientific men, Compton, Cabot, and Carrel. Arthur Compton, eminent research physicist, of the University of Chicago, stands today among the world's great scientists. In his book, *Freedom of Man*, he develops the Heisenberg formula of indeterminacy in physics. Without going very far into this complex field, suffice it to say that this view of quantum physics upsets the old idea of absolute mechanical relation between cause and effect. Given the same set of conditions, you may have different effects at different times. The so-called uniformity of nature is not a mechanical thing, at all, but operates by the law of averages. It is statistical uniformity, rather than mechanical uniformity. I happen to be a director of the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund. Every month, at our directors' meetings, we read the mortality lists, and we can forecast the number of men who will die next year, but we don't know who will die. It is just statistical uniformity. So the uniformity of nature can be depended upon, not because of an absolute mechanical relation between cause and effect, but because there is a law of averages which produces what might be called a large-scale uniformity. But the law of averages is a mental, not a spiritual, law. You are led at once to conclude that there must be some great controlling intellectual and spiritual power which produces that uniformity, and produces it, not by mechanical means, at all. In other words, you are led to the spiritual force pervading this universe, and whom we call God. Moreover, says Compton, with this view there is a place and a demand for nonphysical forces—for the human will and for the power and efficiency of prayer. Under that view, the

uniformity of thinking is not produced by the action and the reaction of brain cells, but by the spiritual control of personality, a thing apart from the brain cells, and which persists when the brain cells perish. So much for the background.

Now come to our second writing. It is a lecture delivered by Doctor Cabot, the world-famous Harvard physician and scientist, on what he calls, "The Wisdom of the Body." He points out that the human body is full of spare parts. Twice as much lung and liver tissue as we need! Extra intestinal strands for emergency purposes! He shows the marvelous adaptability of the body in maintaining the acid and alkaline balances, and the equilibrium of the red and white corpuscles of the blood. He develops the wonderful mechanism of compensation, by which one part of the body may take up and compensate for the failure of other parts to perform their functions. He tells of a man fatally injured in an automobile accident in his late sixties, of whom his wife said he had never had a sick day in his life. An autopsy showed him to have in his body four fatal diseases. But Cabot goes on to show how the forces of nature are constantly battling to preserve life, to maintain the balance and efficiency of this marvelous mechanism which we call the human body. And he adds that the Lord of Life is in the whole amazing phenomenon. Cabot declares that men are wont to say this amazing power of recuperation in the human is *vis medicatrix naturae*. But he says, "No, it is *vis medicatrix dei*." Not the healing power of nature, but the healing power of God. And by a sort of curious irony, the same magazine which contained this writing of Doctor Cabot's had an article by a somewhat learned theological critic which sneered at the doctrine of design as having been outmoded by Immanuel Kant and David Hume a hundred and fifty years ago. The preacher among the scorners, and the great scientist among the prophets!

Now if you accept these two verdicts of eminent men: first, that there is a place for nonphysical forces, such as prayer and the human will, as producing effects even in the organic world; and then if you catch Doctor Cabot's concept of the Lord of Life striving always against the forces of disease and dissolution, you are ready for the verdict of Doctor Carrel, eminent Nobel Prize winner, research man under the Rockefeller Institute, whose assistant in recent years has been one Charles Lindbergh, of whom you have heard. No man speaks with greater weight of authority than Carrel. He tells us that as yet man is unknown. Science started as far away from man as it

could, beginning to study the stars, and then coming to the earth, studying the mechanics of the universe, "seeing the wheels go round," and, at last, coming to man himself, but, thus far, knowing very little about him. For the scientific men undertook to apply to the human soul the mechanics of nature about him, and you have such bizarre phenomena as the behaviorist psychology. It looks at the human mind as nothing more than a set of wheels and pulleys and cogs which are worked by some stimulus from outside himself. In other words, the behaviorist's attempts to apply the rules of mechanics to the inner workings of a man's mind produced the paradox of a "thinking behaviorist." For, by definition, a behaviorist cannot think; he can only react to stimuli. Carrel says, on the contrary, you haven't begun to understand what is in a man. There are mystic, psychic powers which far transcend any mechanical formula. He accepts telepathy without reservation—the communication of mind to mind, without any possible means of physical contact. And then, from that, he goes on to assert, with the weight of his long years of experience behind him, that he knows of instances where prayer has been an effective means of healing the sick, even in the case of organic diseases. If you do not believe that, then your quarrel is with Carrel, and not with me. But I must bear testimony out of certain deep, personal experiences, experiences so intimate and delicate that I could not here recount them, that probably Carrel is nearer right than those of us who, in our blindness and narrowness, have yielded to the tendency to test everything that can happen by the five physical senses. And the ghastly irony of it is that we, who have rationalized into negation all of these boundless, transcendent possibilities of prayer and of the human spirit, sometimes call ourselves liberals. If you are moving solely within the bounds of the physical laboratory, and measuring spiritual possibilities by the test tube, living hidebound in a world of hard mechanism, do not, I entreat you, call yourself a liberal.

Here, in a word, are three great contemporary scientific men who stand up to assure us that maybe James knew what he was talking about better than some of us. Who of us knows enough about a man to assert that mental telepathy, the healing power of prayer, the spiritual fellowship of people who love each other and who are separated by miles of space, or even communication with the spirits of just men made perfect, is impossible. Who knows what is in man? Carrel calls his book, *Man, The Unknown*. But of the divine elder brother of James it was said, "He knew what was in man."

And, to Him, prayer was the most powerful factor in the whole world of spiritual causes. "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer." "He spake this parable unto them: that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Thus, this great book of practical religion is, after all, rooted down into deep and vital and even mystical experiences of God. This outstanding champion of the rights of man, this prophet of a better social order, an order wherein every man should have a square deal, where human brotherhood should be the law of the land, and where faith and friendship should displace fear and force between nations, was not shallow enough to ground his social views in mere humanism. He grounded it in God. And I prophesy utter and irretrievable failure in any system of social progress built upon materialism and neglecting the eternal destiny and eternal capacity of human souls. In the long run, the Russian experiment, or any other, will find that it cannot get on without Him. As Emerson said about the Hindu Brahman:

"They reckon ill who leave me out;
From me they fly, I am the wings,
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings."

Matthew Arnold saw far more clearly than the humanist when he realized that whatever you say about the personality of God, there was in this universe a power "not of ourselves" that works for righteousness. The fact is that men who, in their intellects, are unable to believe in a personal God, nevertheless live in dependence on Him. Professor Otto does not believe in a God, but that does not mean that he is without God or without a dependence on Him. John said, "That was the true light which, coming into the world, lighteth every man," no matter what he believes. Paul was speaking in the universal sense when he said that "in him we live and move and have our being." A recent pathetic letter in a liberal religious paper stated the case of a man who had become deaf, unable to work, who was without money and had a dependent family, and whose one resource was heavy insurance payable at his death. And this man put his case to the humanists: "My life is a burden to me; my death would provide for my children through my insurance. If there be no God, what is there to stand between me and suicide?" A little later, Mr. Harry Elmer Barnes, that redoubtable bushwhacker on the left wing of the army of negation, writes

to the paper to commend to that suffering soul a recent address by an eminent humanist, entitled "Meeting Trouble Without God." Now I venture to say that one might meet trouble without a belief in God, but nobody can meet trouble without God. It is only the divine in us that gives us the grace and courage to go on and to face life in spite of its sorrows and disasters. And this divine somewhat comes from outside ourselves and manifests itself despite our intellectual beliefs one way or another. Mr. Will Durant has recently sent a series of inquiries to eminent men something like this: "What is it that keeps you going on and working, trying to do something worthwhile in life?" Mr. George Bernard Shaw, in characteristic fashion, replies, "How the devil should I know?" Well, every man to his own chosen divinity! But Mr. Henry Mencken, in a more thoughtful way, answers, "I go on working as a hen goes on laying eggs. There is in every creature an obscure, powerful impulse to active functioning." And for once it seems to me that Mr. Mencken is right. There is a force within us for which we cannot account, which we have not willed into being, which we cannot even control, which impels us to go out and do our work and face life to the end. No matter what Mr. Mencken may think about God, that is God working in him.

Men may argue as they will, and probably will go on with this sword play and logic until the end of time, for the sheer intellectual pleasure thereof. But deep down in our hearts we know that there is a God because we must have Him. Not only because every other instinct of humanity has a fact corresponding to it, but because the assurance of this fact is a part of the instinct itself. "My soul is athirst for God; yea, even for the living God. When shall I come and draw nigh to him?"

And as I have read the everlasting debates about God, the arguments pro and con, the parry and thrust, the syllogisms, the retort, the finespun, hairsplitting exhibition of intellectual acumen, I have been reminded of Walt Whitman's poem:

"When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide and measure them,
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars."

I think there are times when, sick with all the arguments "about it and about," we want to go out and look up. We *must* look up. And we know, deep down in our hearts, that we look up not simply to cold stars, but to the overarching love of a Heavenly Father. Men may live and serve and face the tragedies of life bravely without that intellectual belief. But how much more bravely they can meet them if they have it. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I?" What may that rock be? I seem to see one in days of old who appears to me all the more divine because He was so thoroughly and completely human. There is no stage setting, no theatricals. You see Him in the most natural surroundings. A boy in the carpenter's shop; a man talking in the market places; one who did not dress differently or act differently than His fellowmen, as John the Baptist did; one who went to church pretty regularly, though that synagogue service must have been dull; one who even paid taxes to the Roman Empire, like every other good citizen; one who ate and drank with all sorts of men! Yet, enhanced by this homely surrounding, there shines out a gleam of original divinity. We know that even He kept His contact with the powers of the infinite world above Him. Even *He* said, "I and my Father are one," and lived His life in communion with that Father. In so far as He shared our human limitations He shared and verified our sense of dependence upon the Heavenly Father.

At the last I see Him bearing a cross and making His way, bleeding and wounded and weary, up a green hillside beyond a city wall. He faints under the intolerable burden, and they call a man named Simon, a Cyrenian, to carry the cross for Him, and pressed him into service. I have no doubt that Simon cursed his luck that day, but how many millions of men since that time have envied him. And the Figure goes up to that hilltop, that fearful Golgotha, where sin and suffering took their ultimate toll. And there blazes out from that hilltop the intolerable light of God's redeeming love to me and to you and to all the world. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I"—the place of the cross, to that mountain top where God came down to show men the depth and the riches of His redeeming love.

I know of no base of construction for a new social order except this. Other foundation can no man lay than the Rock of Ages.

The Contribution of Reinhold Niebuhr

JOHN C. BENNETT

REINHOLD NIEBUHR is the most significant influence in contemporary American religious thought. It is possible to date a profound change in the climate of American religious opinion from the publication of his *Moral Man and Immoral Society* in 1932. It is quite common to dismiss him with a shrug of the shoulder as an unpleasant pessimist and an inconvenient critic of assumptions which have become too much a part of us to question. I have known people who have dismissed him without reading carefully one of his books.

But Reinhold Niebuhr cannot be dismissed in that way unless we choose to live in a fool's paradise. He has mediated to America insights which have become commonplaces of European Christianity. He might be described as the soul of Europe hovering over American thought. Fortunately, he represents those insights in so moderate a form that it is possible for Americans to understand them without actually going through the experiences which have molded the minds of European Christians. Before I suggest the nature of Niebuhr's contribution I shall describe some of the general characteristics of his method of thinking, for unless we understand those characteristics we are in danger of being blocked by them in reading his books.

1. *Niebuhr is at the same time the representative of several different or opposing traditions.*

It is in this fact that we can see one of the reasons for the richness, the originality, the provocativeness, the unfinishedness of his thought. Most of us are rather simple children of one tradition. Even if we have made a transition from American Fundamentalism to American Liberalism, our cultural assumptions do not necessarily change. When we get a new insight we modify our position in the light of it but the total pattern of our thought keeps the same center. But Niebuhr's thought is rooted at the same time in Christian orthodoxy (with a Lutheran slant) colored by direct contact with Barthian thought and sympathetic study of Catholicism, in Marxism, which furnishes the initial clue for his interpretation of the human situation

as well as for his view of social strategy, and in liberalism, which is still an important factor in his thought. The contact of his mind with these streams of thought is far more vital than the usual academic contact which those who teach the history of thought have with varying traditions. Along with the influence from these various traditions is the fact that Niebuhr is bilingual in his background and is quite as much influenced by German thought as by American thought and by German situations as by American situations.

2. *The tendency to offer broad generalizations concerning traditions and groups.*

It is noticeable that Niebuhr almost never takes up an individual thinker and carefully sorts out the points of weakness and strength in his thought. When he quotes from individual writers it is very often to hold them up as horrible examples of a tendency which he is criticizing. He deals in tendencies and generalizations. He paints the theological landscape with a broom—using the broom quite frequently for its accustomed purpose. Here are some of the tendencies and groups which at some points he rejects (they include the tendencies by which he is most influenced):

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Liberalism | The educationalists |
| Christian orthodoxy | The sociologists |
| Barthianism | The enlightenment |
| Marxism | The bourgeois |
| Rationalism | The proletariat |
| Moralism | |
| Monism | |
| Dualism | |
| Pacifism | |

I think that it is this intellectual habit of Niebuhr's (a fault, perhaps, and yet the medium through which much of his most helpful thinking is done) which causes more people to stumble than any other thing and for a very good reason. Among the many tendencies or groups which are dismissed there is always that to which the reader belongs and thus for him Niebuhr becomes painful reading. The reader has a sense of being treated unfairly, because he knows that if Niebuhr were to deal with his thought with full discrimination the particular form of the tendency which he represents would appear in a better light. That is often true, because an individual thinker often has the worst edges of his thought worn off by com-

mon sense and the attempt to meet criticisms. Liberals, for example, who have digested Niebuhr's criticism of them, become liberals with a difference.

3. *The dialectical character of Niebuhr's thought.*

I am using that overused word, "dialectical," to mean the preservation of opposing tendencies in a state of tension. Niebuhr sets forth these extreme positions which he criticizes and for the most part leaves them to correct each other. He does not offer a compromise between them. He does not give us a synthesis of them. He does not do what most of us do—take one of them and correct it in the light of the others. He leaves the opposites standing, after severe criticism, and his constructive thought is made up of the tension between these opposites. This way of thinking means in practice that if you read only one chapter or article of Niebuhr's he seems very one-sided and extreme; but if you read his work as a whole you find that no thinker could be more balanced.

By this method—by allowing each tendency to criticize the other—he maintains a kind of transcendence of all. This is especially true of Marxism, the Lutheran type of orthodoxy, and liberalism. It is also true of monism and dualism in his ultimate philosophical position. Many of us cannot rest in such a tension. We feel impelled to sort out the strong and weak points in the various tendencies and to push through to some kind of synthesis, to a more coherent system of thought. Niebuhr would probably call that "rationalism." But even if we do that our systems will have to be broken up periodically, for they are sure to settle into a rut controlled by one or another of the types of thought which Niebuhr holds in a state of tension. In the meantime Niebuhr does all of us a vast service by keeping alive the elements which must go into any system and preserving between them a rough balance.

I shall now attempt to show the chief contributions of Niebuhr to American religious thought and then I shall suggest the chief questions which his thought raises in my own mind. This article is thus an evaluation of Niebuhr's contribution rather than an attempt at a complete exposition of his thought.

NIEBUHR'S CHIEF CONTRIBUTIONS

1. *A "realistic" view of the human situation.*

Underlying all of Niebuhr's thought is his keen perception of the

stubbornness of evil in the human situation. He has torn the masks off modern life more successfully than any other religious thinker in America. One should say here that his habit of honesty, of ruthless honesty, in dealing with life and with himself is more important than any of his conclusions. It is interesting to see this habit of honesty at work in his *Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic*—a little book published years before his present conclusions took very definite form.

This natural honesty has been sharpened by Marxist realism which sees through the façades of our civilization. These façades have been so impressive—in most recent years the impressiveness is getting rather thin—that most of us have to become partial converts to Marxism for a time in order to see through them. But Niebuhr's vision has also been sharpened by the traditional Christian faith, so that he can in advance see through the façades which a Marxist civilization would create. This combination of both Marxist and Christian realism has actually made Niebuhr thus far a surprisingly accurate prophet in the predictive sense. Anyone who reads through *Moral Man and Immoral Society* today can hardly fail to observe that what seemed almost catastrophic pessimism in 1932 has turned out to be an all too obvious picture of the forces with which we have now to contend in society.

In his more recent writings, Niebuhr brings his observations concerning the human situation into a close relation with the traditional Christian emphasis upon sin, and especially upon the idea of the fall and original sin. As I shall suggest later, I believe that it is at this point that Niebuhr's thought does take a turn which is open to serious question, but he does present one insight which is most fruitful. He emphasizes the fact that sin "lies at the juncture of nature and spirit." Sin is not merely atavism which can be expected to be outgrown. On the contrary, with each higher level of life new possibilities of evil and sin appear. As I understand him, he employs the "myth" of the fall to underline this fact that the corruption of the good can be expected to attend even our highest spiritual developments.

Niebuhr finds evil more stubborn and more destructive in the life of social groups than in the life of the individual. This distinction between "moral man" and "immoral society" is so important for his thought and is so often misunderstood that I must deal with it at the risk of laboring the obvious.

Something must be said, first of all, about what this distinction between moral man and immoral society does not mean.

It does *not* mean that man as such is moral and that only the institutions of society corrupt him. That Rousseauistic position is far removed from his thought, though it must be admitted that the title does strongly suggest it. No, Niebuhr is clear about the fact that the evils of society are rooted in the egoistic impulses of the human heart. In particular, in his more theological phase, where he relates his thought to the doctrine of sin, he completely escapes from any suggestion of an external explanation of evil which finds its source only in social institutions. He has no more frequent foil than the utopianism of Communism which is rooted in just such an external view of evil and which ignores the perennial sources of evil in human nature.

It does *not* mean that he is condemning group life as such. I have often run into the criticism which is based upon the false idea that he does this. It is obvious that group life socializes the individual up to a certain point, that some groups raise their members to a higher level than is characteristic of their conduct in other relationships.

Niebuhr is concerned not with group life as such but with the large-scale, unselected groups—the nation, the class, and the race. He claims that nations, classes, and races fall below the standards of the average members of those groups in their relationships with each other. Not only does he claim that this is so; he also claims that there are limitations in human nature which will always make it so. Is this second claim correct? I shall outline the chief reasons which he gives for it.

There are at least three such reasons.

(1) The group—nation, race, class—is a limit beyond which the imagination of the individual extends with difficulty. It can be extended, but there is always at this point a profound handicap in human life. He repeatedly asserts that no one of us can visualize the interests of others with the same vividness with which we do our own—and when the others are at a great distance, or when they belong to other groups, to groups whose interests conflict with the interests of our own group, the handicap is vastly greater. It is so hard to get outside the circle of those who love us—that circle which we can regard as an extension of ourselves.

(2) The group—and this is especially true of the nation—compounds the loyalty and devotion of its members into group egoism. In this way

it satisfies the higher impulses of human nature in drawing forth this altruism and devotion in the very process of pursuing destructive policies in relation to other groups. War, for example, often calls forth the best to do the worst.

(3) To an amazing degree, group interest is rationalized and idealized so that the average person, and often even the most sophisticated intellectuals, come to look upon the interests of their group as universal interests. Thus, wars are fought for democracy or to preserve culture against barbarism, or to evangelize the heathen or to protect the weak. Niebuhr shows how this process of rationalization is carried on with varying degrees of sincerity. He says that a statesman of the type of Woodrow Wilson must deceive himself. Others may find it enough to deceive the people. I think that there is no more important feature of Niebuhr's writings than his many studies of self-deception. One of the best is to be found in his chapter on "The Ethical Attitudes of Privileged Classes" in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Niebuhr is an expert on the way in which all of us with varying degrees of honesty and hypocrisy deceive ourselves, so that we think that evil is good, and that our interests are in harmony with the interests of all. In this process of self-deception, it is often our ideals, our higher loyalties, and even our religion, which are used to cover up the narrow interests of class and race and nation.

Before I leave the subject of the realism of Niebuhr's view of the human situation, it would be desirable to call attention to the optimistic side of Niebuhr's thought, which is usually lost from sight. There is a strain running through all of his writings which, if it were emphasized a little more, would make it clear that he maintains a good balance between optimism and pessimism. J. H. Muirhead, in a review of *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pointed out that only a slight change of emphasis would have made it seem a hopeful book. This hopeful side is obscured by three things. It is obscured by the constant polemic which Niebuhr carries on against the optimistic liberals. It is obscured by the background of the perfectionism which makes every human act seem distant from the ideal. It is obscured by his clear recognition of the threat of catastrophes which hangs over our world, a recognition which is now a commonplace of journalism. Niebuhr sees the good in human nature. His distinction between moral man and immoral society enables him to maintain a fully realistic view of the total human situation and at the same time to do full justice

to the real measure of good in human nature. He emphasizes the fact that the impulses of sympathy and generosity are a part of the picture and that their scope can be considerably enlarged by education and religion. He shows that ethical and theological theories which take full account of this better side of human nature are far sounder than those based upon pure pessimism or cynicism. In a summary of what he understands Jesus' conception of human nature to be, one can find the view which is characteristic of his own writings if taken as a whole. He says:

"In the same way Jesus finds glimpses of God, of pure spirit, of perfect love, in human nature, in the love of parents for their children for instance, and in the innocence of little children; yet he also knew that out of the heart of this same human nature 'proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.' His confidence in the goodness of human nature is not as simple as that of liberal Christianity. The Kingdom of God, in his view, will be established not by the goodness of loving men but by the grace of God. Yet there are glimpses of the eternal and the absolute in human nature."¹

Niebuhr not only admits that there is great good in human nature, but he also admits that it is possible to achieve a high degree of justice and social harmony in the world. He says, for example, that "a progressively higher justice and more stable peace can be achieved."² He presents as an attainable goal for modern men: "a society in which there will be enough justice, and in which coercion will be sufficiently non-violent to prevent his common enterprise from issuing in complete disaster."³ That may not be a goal which satisfies us, but it does mean a society which would be a framework in which individuals and Christian groups could live without intolerable compromise and without the continual threat of self-destruction. His position has been summarized recently in this way: "No absolute limit can be placed upon the degree to which human society may yet approximate the ideal. But it is certain that every achievement will remain in the realm of approximation."⁴ Who can say more?

2. *Political Strategy.*

It is only possible to mention a few points about Niebuhr's view of political strategy. His thought here grows out of his realism concerning the human situation. It is the stubbornness of the egoism of social groups which

¹ *Reflections on the End of an Era*, p. 282.

² *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 256.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴ *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 111.

makes it difficult for him to believe that a social strategy based upon persuasion alone will succeed in bringing about that transfer of power in society which Niebuhr as a Socialist believes to be essential for justice and social health.

In a general way Niebuhr follows the Marxist pattern in his political thinking. Perhaps his essential idea is that in the changing of society it is necessary to use the dynamic which comes from the interests of those groups which suffer most from the present order.

Niebuhr in no way idealizes the so-called proletariat. They are not more righteous than privileged groups—except that they have fewer temptations to hypocrisy, as the worst hypocrisy is generated in the defense of special privilege. But the future is with the workers and their allies. Niebuhr, in common with many American Marxists, does not seem to me to be altogether clear or consistent in his estimate of the place of the farmers and middle-class groups in the social struggle. But he is clear enough on the point that American radicalism must not antagonize these groups and that in varying degrees they must become the allies of the industrial workers.

The future is with the workers and their allies because they have power in our society which is more strategic than the legal power of property. They control directly the means of production. Also, they have superior stamina, developed out of the very hardships of their lives. But, in the long run, it is equally important that they have objective justice on their side, and this fact will enable them to undercut the moral foundations of the old order.⁵

They are driven by a mixture of motives, by interest and vengeance, by hate and envy, by a sense of justice and a high solidarity. As Niebuhr says, "the executors of judgment in history are always driven by both hunger and dreams, by both the passions of warfare and the hope of the city of God."⁶

At every point in the process of social change Christians face the necessity of compromise. If they do not co-operate with these classes which are seeking to change society from this mixture of motives, they are compromised by all the evil to which they consent and by which they profit in the present order—evil which includes at all times a vast amount of coercion, such as the coercion of economic power over men threatened with

⁵ *Reflections on the End of an Era*, p. 146.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

hunger and from which overt violence in the interests of privilege is never far from the surface. If Christians do co-operate with the political movements which are striving for a new order they will compromise, because of the degree to which sub-Christian motives drive those movements. They will help to let loose forces which will at times find expression in violence. The point to be noted is that the compromise begins before the stage of violence is reached. Moreover, the overt violence which is at times the resort of less privileged groups is morally less serious than the coercion which is inherent in economic power and which is so great that those who wield that power can most often get their way without overt violence.*

* (NOTE: There is no space to consider adequately Niebuhr's views about violence. It should be made clear, however, that Niebuhr believes that there are situations in which public policy in the restraint of evil may result in violence, as in the case of the putting down of a counter revolution, but that he definitely rejects insurrectionism as a method of bringing about social change. His reputation as one who is quite tolerant of violence comes from the fact that he sees that even the policies which many American pacifists advocate—such as economic sanctions—may have results, such as starvation, which are the moral equivalent of overt violence and may easily provoke reprisals with which those responsible for such policies must deal.)

3. *The tension between the transcendental and the historical.*

Niebuhr's theology in its present development is chiefly a framework of thought which makes it possible to maintain this tension between the transcendental and the historical. In this respect Niebuhr is a very close follower of Paul Tillich. It is in his latest book, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, that Niebuhr works out most fully this theological framework. One should say in passing that this book is probably his most valuable, but since it is the only one of his larger books which does not have a provocative title, the danger is that it will be passed by.

As usual, Niebuhr's thought is hammered out in relation to the extreme possibilities. He deals with Orthodoxy (especially in its Lutheran form), Liberalism, and Communism, and shows how each of them destroys this tension. Orthodoxy destroys it by sacrificing the world of time and history to the transcendental and the eternal. This means in practice a religious pessimism which has no hope at all for developments in history, which levels all human moral distinctions, which regards the whole historical process as so completely corrupted by sin that all the differences between

social systems are of little significance in comparison with the sin which they have in common.

Liberalism has destroyed this tension by sacrificing the transcendent to the world of time and history. It has thought of the progressive realization of the kingdom of God in history. It has so identified God with the human process or with a particular set of human ideals that there is in practice nothing transcendent left.

Communism destroys the tension by its optimism, greater even than the optimism of Liberalism—after the revolution, by its expectation of a complete utopia when the last traces of capitalism are eradicated from human society.

One can best understand Niebuhr's thought at this point if one considers it in the light of what next to Liberalism is his favorite foil—Communist utopianism. His preoccupation with the problem has thrown his thought out of perspective in relation to American issues. (I have heard him take up a large part of a speech to a conference of young students from rather isolated colleges on the dangers of Communist utopianism—students who were not yet emancipated from the parental Republicanism!) In showing up the fallacy of the Communist expectation that there will be no evils in the fully developed Communist society and hence no place for religion, which is regarded as no more than a means of escape from the frustrations of life, Niebuhr has developed perhaps the most significant criticism of Communism from the Christian point of view. This can be found in his chapter in the symposium, *Christianity and the Social Revolution*.⁷

There is, however, another application of this emphasis upon the tension between the historical and the transcendent, a tension which can never be overcome because of the sin and finiteness which are inherent in the human situation. There is here a safeguard against fanaticism. Niebuhr regards self-righteous fanaticism, which sees evil only in the opponent, which is incapable of repentance, as the chief scourge of our time. Men who believe that they are the instruments through whom the absolute is to be realized in history are mankind's greatest dangers. Since they are unable to see the evil in themselves, they are incapable of forgiveness; and since they regard their opponents as devils they will stoop to any cruelty in dealing with them.

⁷ Edited by Lewis, Polanyi, and Kitchin.

When Niebuhr wrote *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, he believed that it was well to encourage the illusions of utopian expectation as a source of dynamic and he closed the book with these words: "Nothing but such madness will do battle with malignant power and 'spiritual wickedness in high places.' The illusion is dangerous because it encourages terrible fanatisms. It must therefore be brought under the control of reason. One can only hope that reason will not destroy it before its work is done."⁸ I am sure that the closing paragraph about illusions has been quoted more widely than anything else in the book and many people have failed to see the importance of the book because they could not accept that paragraph. In his later writings Niebuhr has become more convinced of the danger of fanaticism nourished by such illusions and so we find him modifying his position at this point. There is nothing which he fights harder than utopian illusions.

One aspect of this tension between the transcendent and the historical is, in Niebuhr's thought, the conviction that the Christian ethic of love is relevant to every social situation but fully applicable to none. He uses the paradoxical words—"impossible possibility"⁹—to sum up this idea. Christian love is impossible in the sense that there are always obstacles to its complete realization. It is possible in the sense that it never loses its significance as a norm. One can only get the full force of this position if one considers it in contrast with optimistic liberalism, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, with the extreme pessimism of much Lutheran theology. From an ecumenical perspective it should be said that Niebuhr occupies at this point a central position which enables him to mediate between the opposing tendencies in Anglo-Saxon and Continental theology.

Niebuhr in this aspect of his thought has provided a significant criticism of Communism. He has succeeded in maintaining the relevance of the Christian ethic for every situation. He has shown the conditions for preserving religious vitality—a sense of sin and contrition combined with a sense of the absolute. He has presented a kind of religion which can be prophetic in every social situation, providing that outside view of every society which is essential for health and growth. He has suggested an attitude with which we may participate in the social struggles of our time without the self-righteousness which breeds fanatical fury and cruelty.

⁸ *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 277.

⁹ *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, Chap. 4.

4. *Grace and forgiveness.*

Niebuhr's final insight is that the heart of religion is the experience of grace and forgiveness. He deals with this subject in the brief concluding chapters of his last two books. Those discussions are tantalizingly brief. Though they come at the end of each book they are more than perorations, as they are organically related to his whole thought. He deals with grace and forgiveness in fresh terms far removed from the forensic categories of most traditional theology. He thinks of grace as that which gives men fulfillment and peace within the state of tension which is required by the conditions of their lives. "Essentially," he says, "the experience of grace in religion is the apprehension of the absolute from the perspective of the relative. The unachieved is in some sense felt to be achieved or realized. The sinner is justified even though his sin is not overcome."¹⁰ Or again he says in words which suggest Hocking's description of religion as "anticipated attainment."¹¹ "In every life there must at least be times and seasons when the good is felt as a present possession and not as a far off goal."¹²

So far there is merely a hint of what this means. How this grace is mediated is not worked out though Niebuhr is sure that ecclesiastics and theologians have limited its channels far too much. But here we get a glimpse of a "Social Gospel" which is adequate for times of social frustration to which the older "Social Gospel" was quite irrelevant. Men in the present can experience something of the eternal in spite of the evils in which their lives are entangled. There is here a close affinity between Niebuhr's thought and Tillich's conception of "Kairos."¹³

Men who are themselves contrite and who are conscious of this grace and forgiveness are not the men who will be the cruel fanatics and "shut the gates of mercy on mankind." They will be able to preserve charity even toward opponents in the social struggle. This is Niebuhr's solution of one of the most perplexing ethical problems—participation in the social struggle in the spirit of one who preserves the perspective on it which comes from his own experience of forgiveness.¹⁴

CRITICISMS OF NIEBUHR

Because of the dialectical structure of his thought, Niebuhr is difficult

¹⁰ *Reflections on the End of an Era*, p. 281.

¹¹ *Hocking: The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, Chap. 29.

¹² *Reflections on the End of an Era*, p. 285.

¹³ Tillich: *The Interpretation of History*, pp. 123-175.

¹⁴ *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 235.

to criticize fairly because usually the fault that one finds with his thought at one point is corrected somewhere else. Moreover, Niebuhr's thought is obviously in a continuous process of development and whole areas of it—as for example the idea of God—are left with only hints of his full meaning. I shall suggest questions which are raised by his thought in my mind rather than criticisms.

1. *The habit of wrestling with points of view in their extreme forms.*

There is no doubt that this tendency, already described, creates in the minds of most readers at one time or another a sense of unfairness and unreality.

2. *The conception of God's activity is left without adequate development.*

God is for him the source of all existence. God is the goal of existence (not in temporal terms—but rather the being which eternally gives meaning to existence). God is the source of judgment on every situation. God is the source of grace and forgiveness in the face of sin and evil. It is difficult to find much else about God's activity in Niebuhr's pages. What is to be said about his creative work in the events of history? If one were to take seriously either any form of divine immanence or the idea that in the Incarnation and the Church there is a positive activity of God in history one would at least gain a very different perspective on the historical situation.

3. *There is everywhere a background of perfectionism.*

This perfectionism makes his thought seem more deeply pessimistic than it really is. There is hankering after what he calls "pure spirit," whatever that may be. There is straining after the "absolute" and "the unconditioned." He says at one point: "Every life deserves destruction"¹⁵—a saying which yields no meaning to me. He says that it is our "moral obligation to affirm all life—rather than the life of the ego."¹⁶ It is a curious trace of sentimentality to affirm all life—which Niebuhr takes over from Schweitzer—and it is perhaps as a result of this that every life deserves destruction for even the most innocent child eats meat. Also it is stretching things to say "rather than" the life of the ego instead of "including" the life of the ego. These may seem small points but they do suggest a habit of thought which

¹⁵ *Reflections on the End of an Era*, p. 285.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

leaves me completely baffled. It seems to threaten our ethical sense of proportion and when it is linked with the idea that all below the perfect is sin it lays the ground for a morbid attitude toward that human conduct which is the best possible in a situation.

4. *The interpretation of Jesus' teaching seems to be an example of the habit of seeing everything in its most extreme form.*

Jesus is for Niebuhr the bearer of the transcendent ideal of pure love interpreted in terms of pure selflessness and pure nonresistance. He waves aside the prudential elements in the teachings of Jesus though he admits their presence. His interpretation of love seems to be far too much in terms of feelings which are possible only in intimate relationships and not in terms of a pattern of life which is possible or even desirable in all relationships. He has no clear place for the aggressiveness of Jesus in dealing with evil. Jesus' denunciation of the Pharisees would seem to mar the portrait of Jesus which Niebuhr gives but if that is the case the trouble is with that portrait and with the one-sided ideal of Christian perfection which Niebuhr draws from it.

5. *Little attention to what an awakened church can do.*

In Niebuhr's earliest writings he wrestled more with the problems of the Church. Today, one can get very little light from him on what the Church can most effectively do to counteract the immorality of other groups. He leaves us with the sinful individual standing before God in an evil world. It must be granted that the Church cannot be regarded as a moral group over against immoral groups because its members are controlled far too much by the interests of the natural groups to which they belong. But more attention to the creative possibilities of the Christian group which has been brought to repentance might at least give a different emphasis to one's view of what is possible in society.

6. *The conception of sin.*

Niebuhr's conception of sin throws great illumination on the problem and taken as a whole is sound enough. But it is not developed with clarity and at times it suggests at least the following dangers:

(a) There is insufficient emphasis upon the importance of Niebuhr's own distinction between sin and finiteness. Especially in his theological phase, he plays into the hands of those who reduce the whole human problem to the problem of sin.

(b) At other times he runs into the danger of defining sin too narrowly, in terms of actual rebellion against God, of making the self the center of existence.¹⁷ His definition of sin in terms of rather grandiose attitudes—such as making oneself God—hardly corresponds to the more common sins of complacency and slackness, petty jealousy and all the lesser forms of egoism which may make the difference between sensitivity and insensitivity toward the needs of others.

(c) The greatest danger in Niebuhr's discussion of sin is that he makes insufficient allowance for degrees of sin, either in the form of degrees of moral responsibility or in the form of degrees of objective evil. When the connection between sin and degrees of moral responsibility is not emphasized the result is that we may morbidly exaggerate the sense of sin for those compromises which are inescapable. Where we cannot escape compromise, we should feel a moral tension but it should differ in quality from the sense of guilt. When the connection between sin and the degrees of objective evil is not emphasized, there is a great danger that we will fall into the habit of thinking that since we must sin in any case the degree of the evil which we do is not of first importance. This is the exact opposite of the intention of his thought as a whole but still it lurks as a danger. It is my own conviction that, at this point, there is still much to be said for a pacifist criticism of Niebuhr. He has made his case against absolute pacifism with great force but may it not be true that there are types of violence which are an essential part of modern war and which are so extreme in degree and so basely treacherous in quality that they place a limit upon compromise regardless of any pragmatic calculation of consequences? He rejects any pacifism which is not based on purely pragmatic grounds as perfectionist; but I find it difficult to regard it as a counsel of perfection to draw the line at dropping gas upon a sleeping city.

7. *Precariousness of the relevance of the Christian ideal.*

Niebuhr always seeks as against orthodoxy to preserve the relevance of the Christian ideal but there are times when he carries his polemic against liberalism so far that the relevance of the ideal is threatened. This is a natural result of the dialectical structure of his thought. On one of the rare occasions on which he seems to sacrifice ethics to religion he says: "Forgiving love is possible only for those who know that they are not good—and

¹⁷ *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics*, p. 92.

know that the differences between the good man and the bad man are insignificant in the sight of God."¹⁸ That sentence suggests the leveling of all moral distinctions against which most of his thought is a protest. On another occasion he makes the gulf between justice which is applicable to society and Christian love so wide that again the relevance of the Christian ethic is threatened. He writes: "To approach the relative problem of justice in the realm of politics from the absolute perspective of the Christian ideal is a little like judging the merits of house painting by canons of art which guide a Rembrandt."¹⁹ One would not want to press too much the literal meaning of such an illustration but if the idea in that one sentence were much emphasized the social significance of Niebuhr's religious thought would be seriously undercut—a strange conclusion of the matter. It is not impossible that a more catastrophic social situation may drive Niebuhr's thought in that direction.

8. Inadequate sense of the unpredictable in history.

Doubtless it is true that there are limits to the perfectibility of the human situation and Niebuhr is right in denying the truth of all utopian expectations, Christian or Communist. Yet running through his work there is too much confidence concerning what is possible or impossible in the future. The application to the future of theories based upon the past easily becomes a form of the rationalistic interpretation of life which Niebuhr usually condemns, and it can blind one to the creative factors in the world. As Christopher Dawson says, "No age has ever been able to foresee the age to come." A new truth, a new spiritual or social movement, a new method, a new person may make all the difference.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 226.

¹⁹ *Christianity and the Social Revolution*, p. 445.

Notes on the Problem of Evil

EDWIN MCNEILL POTEAT, JR.

THE fact of change supplies us with the cue to the ultimate explanation of the problem of evil without offering a solution. "Change and decay in all around I see; O Thou, who changest not, abide with me." No change, no decay. God is good, and escapes the assault of evil because He does not change. If He did, He would at least be metaphysically imperiled. Inertia prevents life, immobility thwarts change and knows no error. We do not err until we start something; and a static universe would always be wholly and irrevocably what it began by being. But a universe that is dynamic and mutable might become anything else if it were capricious and yielding to no directivity, or something definite if under the pressure of certain control. Back of the fact of evil lies the fact of change. What we call the laws of nature show that change, motion and activity appear to be orderly, evolving toward definite states. With the entrance of the idea of direction come the concepts of towardness and away-fromness, ideas that supply the basis for judgments of good and evil of every sort in every field where directions exist, whether physical, mental or moral.

Only in such a fashion is it possible to conceive of evil in the inorganic world, a fact that must be assumed in any genetic study of the problem. For in inorganic nature, what may be thought to be the analogue of evil in the physical and moral fields is no more than change in one direction as opposed to change in another possible direction. It is described as cataclysm, disturbance, arrest, fault, and by similar words. Job, in the familiar passage that begins, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble," continues the lament (the passage is in the fourteenth chapter of Job) by saying, "But the mountain falling cometh to nought; and the rock is removed out of its place; the waters wear the stones; the overflowings thereof wash away the dust of the earth; so thou destroyest the hope of man." There evil on the inorganic level is having evil consequences on the sentient level. In *Ethics of the Dust*, Ruskin, after showing his class some specimens of colored marble, says, "There is not a purple vein nor flaming zone in them which is not the record of their ancient torture." We are not

misled by his language into thinking of stones in pain. It means, rather, stones undergoing change. It is easy to think of the process of leveling mountains into plains—a definite geological change in the development of the earth—as being interfered with by an avalanche that dams a stream. Erosion, under the circumstances, would be arrested for a period of time. A tendency of development, that is to say, is arrested. Violent cataclysms at sea or on new continents might be the analogues in inorganic nature of the so-called evil forces in the organic world, or indeed might appear to be evil causes themselves of consequences observed in the organic. But they approximate evil *qua* evil only in so far as they inhibit development in an established direction; and since they may—at different times—both accelerate and retard change, they are evil only when they seem to interrupt a clearly observed tendency of development. This means they are relatively evil. This fact has its counterparts all the way through the problem.

The crowning irony of all development, however, lies in the fact that each step of progress is achieved at the price of heightening the character and extent of evil in the universe. The farther we go, the more inextricably shut up we seem to be in an enterprise that is going forward and backward at the same time. The logic of this fact is that we are plunged into a contest the result of which, in any outcome, is sure to be a Pyrrhic victory. This can be shown by a sketch of the emergence of evil in the various orders of being.

The inorganic order, as just suggested, exhibits evil only in aspects of change of structure or matter resulting either in deflecting or finally obstructing a certain tendency of development. In the lower forms of organic being, life, definitely insurgent, finds evil in all the forces that harass growth. A footstep crushes a flower. A freshet drowns a cornfield. A fire sears a forest. Evil is stalking abroad.

As we ascend in the order of life forms, we discover evil intensified in its work of hindering movement, mobility, and organization. A starfish loses an arm and is slowed up until it grows another. An ant loses an antenna—painlessly, so far as we know—in a battle, and is henceforth circumscribed in its activity. As sensitiveness to ineptitude and wound is heightened, pain enters actively as a factor in behavior. The writhing of a crushed worm is reproduced in the thrashing contortions of an injured snake, but there is more evidence of pain in the struggle of the latter. A mouse squeals in discomfort; a wounded deer shows terror in its eyes; a

tiger roars menacingly in pain and is ten times more ferocious in suffering.

In domesticated brutes particularly is there evidence of what is strongly suggestive of mental agony. A dog cringes when his master scolds, and howls when he raises his hand to strike. A puppy will whine abjectly when deprived of human companionship, and wail with fear and scuttle for safety when danger threatens.

Evil seems to stalk the human animal no matter where he goes. His body is racked with pains due to physical maladjustments; he finds himself guilty of immoral acts because he is socially unadjusted. If, however, he undertakes to escape from malign nature and unsympathetic society, he may end in a state of mental perplexity, spiritual restlessness, or even insanity. Jung, in *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, makes this melancholy comment: "It is the growth of consciousness which we must thank for the existence of problems; they are the dubious gift of civilization."

We are confronted therefore by the disquieting fact that the higher the order of being, the deeper appear the facts and consequences of maladjustment. In such a mood of pessimism, naturalistic romanticism seeks escape from trouble in a return to nature. The extreme logic of the mood would press one to the point of desiring the life of an insect, or better, a plant, or better still, the non-life of a tide-washed grain of sand. Even then solid comfort would come only with the passionless quiet of ebb tide. Quite undeniably the thought of further progress up the scale of life offers the dreary prospect of further evil, coterminus with our advance.

But does it? Posit a still higher order of being—the spiritual. If it is objected that such an order lies beyond the limits of experimental study, it may be replied that much that is vividly real to us lies wholly outside the physical order of being. Mind itself, all aesthetic sensitiveness, and the value of companionship and co-operation are hints, if no more, of the reality of an order of being higher than the physical. Furthermore, if the human being is organic to the nature of things, and if, as appears to be the case, he too has undergone a long and highly involved evolution, it is by no means a groundless fantasy that leads us to expect and work for progress beyond the physical level. For all we know, human physical development has reached a proximate terminus, and further progress will therefore be, for the most part, along the line of man's higher nature—that is, his moral and spiritual personality.

Here the hypothesis of an order of being, eternal perhaps, super-mortal

maybe, meets the need better than any other, and provides a plane upon which the further evolution of life may proceed. Obviously such an evolution is already begun within the physical order here and now, and is measurably contingent upon it. So also is the organic a development within and contingent upon the inorganic. Is it fantastic then to assume that the sentient or self-conscious level may be the matrix of a higher form of being? Unless we see in our present state a foredoomed and abortive effort on the part of nature, or a full and final perfection of natural processes, we must seek a higher level for the completion of the major process which we call the scheme of things.

If we posit a spiritual order of being, we discover three things as we observe the impingement of evil upon it.

In the first place, such a spiritual nature seems to be worthy of being regarded as an end in itself. This claim would be cautiously advanced concerning either the purely inorganic or organic orders of being. To some the heaping up of continents or the fixing of the boundaries of the seas might seem a sufficiently engaging enterprise, but such ideas are hardly more than the projection of our childhood activities into the protean antics of a Titan playing in the sand on the beaches of eternity, or making cosmic mud-pies in an infinite back yard. Nor would the claim of the finality of the physical carry us much farther. It is inevitably smitten by the pitiless hand of death. Death seems always to have the last word, and surely to be lost in its vast debris, crushed out by its inexorable pressure—is a sorry destiny. Can the maximum of physical comfort be the optimum of personality? Does personality write its credit balances in longevity and opulence alone? But unfettered development on a plane of being unembarrassed by time or circumstance—or at least measurably superior to it—is at least the best that can be hypothecated for those who see in beauty, truth and goodness the highest achievements of the cosmic enterprise.

This is, in the second place, reinforced by the further fact that such an order of being would be exempt from certain types of evil. None of the ills to which the flesh is heir, whether of physical pain or the agonies of fear or ignorance, would vex the pure life of the spirit. Moral evil, arising out of social contacts, would impede progress in this realm no more than an earthquake or flood would impede farming. Of all the varieties of ill, only one would significantly remain. It is that high sensitivity called spiritual restlessness, and is such a refinement of the nature of evil that it has lost its

positive aspect, and appears negatively only. It is non-good. Indeed, in its new milieu, it might become the very impulse and spring of spiritual progress. In the life of the spirit there would be nothing apocalyptic and sinister. On the contrary, a degree of spiritual understanding of the nature of the universe might be possible that is withheld from mere cosmic existences.

Thirdly, there is evidence of many sorts for the assurance that the purpose of the vast universe centers somewhere near the perfection of personality. This may be, to be sure, nothing more than a disingenuous human conceit. We may never be sure on this point, but we are likely to make of this sorry scheme of things entire something immeasurably sorrier if we postulate anything less than the high values of personality as its *raison d'être*. And it is obvious to the point of being trite to say that for personality to be, it had to pass through earlier stages of being. The creation by fiat of human perfection is not perfection. The flaccid perfectness of beings *ex nihilo*, prophylactic from the beginning in a hermetically sealed universe where no germ of evil could intrude, is an insipidity from which we recoil in moral disgust. Personality is possible only through struggle, and if its achievement is the cosmic purpose that invites or impels, then the evils of the lesser categories of being are at least incidental to that development, and will be progressively thrown into the discard as the life of the spirit develops puissance and dominance.

History is full of incidents of the triumph of spirit over the flesh. On the lower levels we are increasingly victorious over the malign forces that harried our predecessors. Drouths are checked and floods are impounded. Even earthquake areas contain the inspiration for partially, and ultimately, for completely quake-proof houses. We know that only five infectious diseases are left in the thin red line of pestilence, and their heads are bloody, if unbowed. Successes over the physical world augur further victories. Psychologists tell us they are making progress in the elimination of mental disorders and low IQs, and Professor Watson once promised us prodigies of behavior in children under proper psychological control. These ills, for such a long time regarded as of the very essence of physical being, seem less and less able as time goes on to dragoon us into a fear of fate or a worship of luck. The power of spirit has not yet won its final victories, and may stop short of winning a final triumph. The disappearance of the dinosaurs is warning enough for that. Some inner monitor reminds us

that even when the greatest battles are won over physical ill there will still be stubborn guerrillas and snipers in plain clothes that will hang around the outside of the camp and make occasional sallies, and fire occasional volleys at us, with fatal results. But we seem to have God on the side of the biggest battalions.

Holy men, a term used here out of respect and not flippantly, have also shown the way to overcome moral and physical evil. It is not uncommon for the ecstasies of spirit to dull the edge of physical pain in the commonest of mortals. The flame of patriotism and the hysteria of battle have made many a soldier indifferent to wounds not through a false stoicism, but through an elevation of spirit that is an anodyne for lacerations in otherwise keenly sensitive tissue. And those who give themselves to the cultivation of the powers of the spirit with the passion that characterizes much scientific cultivation of physical energies, report victories over moral and physical ills that parallel scientific achievements. It is a natural step forward when we assume that the unamended life of the spirit will make complete a victory that in the physico-spirit life is necessarily partial.

It is at this point that the philosophical aspect of the problem yields to religion. There is a sound philosophy in Gautama's renunciation of physical comforts in his quest for victory over evil, and it was inevitable that his philosophical cultus should modulate into a religious movement. The same might be said of all religions that have the problem of sin at their core.

This is superlatively true of the religious message of Jesus. "Deliver us from evil," He urged His followers to pray. Nor is it a *tour de force* to find in those words a sound philosophical basis. Delivering us from evil is immeasurably different from taking evil away from us. The latter He could not ask His Father to do; the former He constantly felt His Father doing for Him. These words were born of a simple experience, confirmed, no doubt, over and over again by victories His spirit won over His physical ills. It takes but a casual reading of His words to see that He regarded His business of saving people from sin as a process of lifting them on to a level of life that would, by its very nature, start the process going automatically. Lifting the Son of man was a part of lifting the sons of men up. And the process was a cross! Hence His categorical imperative to Nicodemus, a rhetorical expedient which, despite His pre-eminence as a moralist, He resorted to only twice. It was necessary for

him to be born of the spirit, he who had only been admitted to the life of the flesh. "Marvel not that I say unto you, ye must be born again." If you aren't—He might have gone on to say—so far as you are concerned, the plans of God are abortive. The Rich Young Ruler, the Samaritan Woman, Zaccheus and many other cases in point will occur to the mind seeking support for this proposition. His promises of victory over sin (evil) to those who essayed His manner of life were properly unconditional because His way was definitive. Nor can His enigmatic words "I am the life," "I have overcome the world" and "he that believeth in me shall never see death" be understood in a different context. That Jesus was philosophically sound is not His least claim to leadership among those who value the things of the spirit.

After all there runs a positive consistency through the universe. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; that which is born of the spirit is spirit. It might be extended to say that that which is born of the grass is grass, and so on down to the point where the act of birth becomes attenuated to the point of being something else.

But the final settlement of the problem will be personal, and not metaphysical. The removal of all objective evil—a remote prospect if indeed a prospect at all—leaves us at grips with evil still inside us. And although this inner ill may be partially explained by circumstances external to us, we can with difficulty escape the fact that only through release from the physical and birth into the spiritual order of life will complete victory be possible. That is redemption. If God looked on the physical world and saw that it was good, how much more exultantly does He look at the struggles toward godlikeness in us, and pronounce us, with every victory, better and better!

There is more than pessimism in the cry of that early advocate of spiritual life—"Deliver me from this body of death." There is a rationale for immortality, an eager certainty of the ultimate perfection of human personality which will bring fruition to the prodigious enterprise of creation. "To this day, we know, the entire creation sighs and throbs with pain; and not only so, but even we ourselves, who have the Spirit as a foretaste of the future, even we sigh deeply to ourselves as we wait for the redemption of the body that means our full sonship." (Romans 8. 23. Moffatt's Translation).

What Is a Church For?

J. EDGAR PARK

ONE of the most beautiful religious symbols ever conceived by the heart of man is The Sacred Wheel of the Indian philosophers. We individuals are all agitated upon the spokes which radiate from the center; the more we go out upon our own way, the further we are from the center, the further we are from one another. But the nearer we draw to the center, the nearer we come toward each other. If we ever could reach the center, we should be one with the central mystery, one with one another, our agitation would be at an end, we should be at peace and rest. It would be no idle or sluggish rest which would be ours; we should be at the central point of the universe on which all motion depends and from which all the spokes of being go forth into all things. We should understand and see and live in all; and all things would live in us.

Religion is the most primitive, the most backward of all the arts. The history of religion is in the future. Hitherto it has been neglected for two main reasons. Because human nature tends to neglect anything which can be postponed for the present, and also because a part of the truth always seems greater than more of it would seem.

Nature always slaps back, as one modern playwright has remarked through one of his characters, but she generally takes years to do so. The mills of God grind slowly. The demands for food and subsistence and diversion are of the insistent instant and crowd the foreground. The philosophy of the political conventions limits itself to the necessity of getting ourselves elected by any means possible. The problems of a sick world can wait till that is accomplished. So they are never met. Even in the most religious centuries, real religion has always been shoved into the background. When we have leisure, we will hear thee of this matter. God stands ever in the midst of human history like a beggar asking alms of them that pass by. The crowd passeth by impelled by the insistent demands of industry and society, philanthropy and politics, death and taxes. Some wise men doubtfully guessed who the Beggar was and called upon Him to show His power. Some rich men cast at Him great gifts which He needed not. Only one of all the multitude paused to call Him

Father and place his whole life in His hands. Him the crowd crucified, and went on their way. At the edge of the multitude the Beggar still stands. As the crowds pass Him now some take notice that *His* hands are pierced. "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What hope that the aspect of that stricken Stranger will ever halt that eager multitude, intent on doing well for themselves or giving others what they consider good for them? God will ever be pushed to the fringes of the crowd, because the hours of the day are short, and others may overtake us in the race for success. In the evening we hope to be able to return and find the Beggar, and give Him alms. But in the twilight hours after the day's work is done He is hard to find.

Religion is really a courtesy founded on a metaphysics, and there are no two such evanescent articles in the world as courtesy and metaphysics. It is remembering the Host, even the Host who disguises Himself not as lord of the manor but as Beggar at the gate. To find the invisible Host in whose house one is being entertained, and in courtesy to Him, to live in accordance with the rules and spirit of the house, to act in grateful deference to His presence and wishes, and with some understanding of the purpose for which the gathering is planned, that might be considered to be the religious spirit. But it is perhaps natural that it should be the last thing thought of by the crowd flocking through His wonderful home and eating at His table. In their relations to each other they are accustomed to demand their rights and impose their personality on the company, and they are not accustomed to the tactics of One who effaces Himself, and stands aside, and leaves His guests so free to act, as if the house had been made and was sustained by their own wonderful selves. They who entertain themselves miss the wonder of the place because they have not recognized Him who standeth at the gate. The bread they eat doth not make them live forever nor doth the water they drink spring up within them as a well of life. They eat His body and drink His blood, but no miracle of transubstantiation takes place and for them there is nothing more; the bread is bread and the wine remains wine.

He standeth at the gate and hears high argument about it and about, whether this house was ever made at all, how it exists without any of us to conduct and direct its affairs, but evermore He sees them go out by that

same door where in they went, because they do not notice the need of a Beggar who standeth there, asking alms. What a shout of merriment would go up around the board if one arose to say, "The reason all things turn to ashes in our hands is because we have not found the master, the director, the reason, the meaning of the place in which we live." "He has made us for himself, and our souls weary themselves until they find their rest in him." It will be long before they rise, and tired of the hopelessness of satisfying themselves with things not made to satisfy, find the Master at the gate and give Him the alms He asks and bring Him in unto the feast as Lord of all. It is not strange. The world, as Stevenson remarked, is full of a number of things; it is not strange that men should go about examining them, and postpone the courtesy of trying to appreciate and understand the hospitality which makes their being possible.

The other reason why religion is in such a primitive and backward state is that one strand in the rope of religion always seems to the possessor to be greater than the entire life line would be. We have tried to be religious while roosting far out on our own individual spokes, far separated from each other and from the center. There is no such thing as a separate and individual religion. He who seems to be most isolated in time and space proves when you come to know him to be one with the whole family of religious souls the world over. Read Meister Eckhardt and read the Indian philosophers. No two inspirations could be further separated in time and space. Yet in the deepest things you will find them to be one, and you can worry yourself trying to prove that in some way one borrowed from the other. There was no such connection. They saw the same things simply because the things they saw were there.

There are three ways of finding God—in your own soul, in your relations with your fellow men, and in your study and understanding of things. There are three types of religious people. There are those who retire into their own hearts and profess to hear the voice of God there, speaking to them of His will for them and for others. The strength of this method is in the certainty which the man feels that he is indeed in communion with God; its weakness lies in the skepticism with which others regard the validity of his revelation, their unwillingness to accept his personal hunches as the cosmic voice of the universe.

There are others who find God exclusively in their relations with their fellow men. For them the universe is mainly an Institute of Human Rela-

tions. Religion is morality. The strength of this position lies in its fruits of human friendliness and usefulness. Its weakness lies in its tendency to accept as its aim material comfort and health for all, enough to care for their further material comfort and health. Its aim is apt to become that of a world where there shall be two cars in every garage and two chickens in every pot.

The third party find God in His outside world, in a philosophy of history, in a scientific understanding of the laws which govern creation, in deducing from the ways of the world what kind of a power it is which expresses itself in the world.

The texts of the three schools are these: The Kingdom of God is within you, God is Love, When I consider the Heavens which Thou hast made. Whether they admit it or not, most serious-minded people fall into one or other of these three classes—the mystics who hear God's voice in their own hearts, the practical philanthropists who find God in social service, the scientists and philosophers who try to follow the ways of God in His world of matter or in pursuit of the eternal laws of truth.

Each party specializes in his own line. The mystic communes with his own heart and is still, the social worker seeks human happiness for all, the scientist and philosopher strive to understand the facts.

So in the West we lie in a straight line, in sections divided each from the other. Each is sure that his religion is the true religion, distinct from the others. But in the East, that great religious symbol came into being by which this line of demarcation might be bent round so that its extreme ends might meet and it might become one. To them came the inspiration that the very god whom one meets in the silence of one's own spirit and in service of one's fellows may be indeed also the god which one discovers in the laws and principles of the outside world. The Sacred Wheel came into existence, which, when one has experienced it, brings all these revelations into a unity. It is the symbol of the experience of one who has learned about his own heart from his sympathetic understanding of the life of his fellows, and whose knowledge and wisdom about the outside world re-echoes against a cosmic background the truths he has learned in his own heart and the hearts of others.

Much of our discouragement about religion is due to this radical division into three schools. The mystic tends to go to seed into sentimentalism, the social worker is apt to awake some day and find himself merely a poli-

tician, the scientists and philosophers are apt to lose themselves in details. The sentimental mystic is scared of the social gospel, the social worker despises the selfish delight in a kind of supersensual petting party enjoyed in conventionally religious services, and the scientists and philosophers divide things in so superior and fine a manner as soon to become incomprehensible to both the other schools.

The only hope of a rebirth of religion lies in the reunion of these three scattered fragments of its spirit. That is what the Church is for. Somehow to give mysticism an adequate test of the validity of its vision, to provide social work with a respectable aim, continually to remind scientists and philosophers that the spadeful of reality they are spending their lives in analyzing is not the whole universe.

Religion should provide a scale for testing the value and worth of experience, an aim high enough to direct and encourage all human lives, an environment large enough to give man's everyday nature as well as his highest aspirations and his deepest insights a habitation and a home. The way of religion must be strait and narrow enough to exclude the mean, the ugly, and the stupid, and broad enough to include all the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds. There is a hell of badness in warning people from which the Church has perhaps too exclusively specialized, for there is also an equally hot hell of ugliness and a hell of stupidity, and the Church must be on its guard against all three. Wrung from Meister Eckhardt in spite of the burning gospel which he preached against sin is the confession: "Nevertheless, I still maintain that intellect is higher than the will," or as Goethe puts it, the devil is part of that power which ever wills the evil, but because of his stupidity, ever brings the good to light.

The Church should not confine itself to harping upon the moral string alone, it must learn to play on all the strings of life with skill. The sacramental and mystic is at the growing end of religion as it debouches out into the unknown, the social gospel is the practical part, the scientific and philosophical examine the dimly conceived insights of religion and add what is true in them to the common stock of the knowledge of mankind.

The task of the Church seems almost superhuman when one compares it with the simpler problem which faced the New Testament writers. They had a small world to subsume under the religious idea. How vast is the world today compared to theirs, yet around it we must trace this consecrat-

ing line which makes it all part of something which can still truly be called a gospel. It seems impossible as one stands off and looks at the problem. It is not impossible as one forgets oneself in the task.

What is the Church for? The main duty of the Church is to preserve for mankind the mystical, the growing end of religion. It is to provide a place so hallowed, so beautiful, as to induce man still to say his prayers, still to seek that inner union with the divine. The defect of all minor art is that in it the sense overpowers the suggestion. In this sphere the Church has too often fallen into very minor art. The fact is that this experience of union with the divine is not an object of knowledge in the ordinary sense. Apart from perception it does not exist. Its perception is a part of its very existence. Therefore it cannot be taught directly. It can only be stimulated by suggestion. Here Protestantism has largely failed, not realizing that religion at its heart has very little to do with words, but only with experience and with deeds. The core of religion cannot be expressed. If Jesus could have said it, He would have said it, but despairing of saying it, He took bread and brake it and gave it to them, or He threw upon the canvas of their imaginations the pictures of the parables, the deeds of the miracles, His own experience of the garden and the cross. The mystic, the growing end of religion, must be suggested by the Church with infinite care and thought and preparation, with art and skill. That suggestion must come by making the church the loveliest spot in town, the service more carefully and painstakingly and skillfully prepared for than any play on screen or stage, any recital of music or exhibit of painting. The attempt to suggest that God is easily approachable by a haphazard slovenliness in His service must be abandoned. Ministers and churches have no special privilege. They must be artists operating under the same discipline as all other artists who strive to suggest through their several mediums, thoughts and moods too deep for words. The first aim of the Church should be to provide a sanctuary, a Meeting-place, and in Puritan days the word Meeting-place did not mean a place where people could meet with each other, but a place where people could meet God.

The second aim of the Church is in our days the most difficult. It is to link that mystical experience inescapably with the moral life of the individual and with the reorganization of human society so as to make it a fitting expression of and container for the experience of religion. It is easy to drop religion altogether and devote oneself simply to advocating social justice, by scolding and reviling the business methods of today. It

is desperately hard to stir up and suggest the deepest religious experiences and to keep the thread of that inspiration from breaking before it reaches the questions of wages and profits and munitions and special privilege. But that thread must be kept intact if the Church is to do anything for social justice. So far a play like "Dead End" or a film like "Modern Times" does it much more effectively than any church service has been able to do. These works of art enlist the sympathy of the audience in the personal victims of the system, and suggest most deftly to the audience their responsibility for the shameful conditions. Is it possible for a church to do the like? I think it is, for there are stops upon the organ of the Church which no place of amusement would dare to use. But it must be done not by abandoning the particular job of religion and asserting that there is nothing in it but social service. It must be accomplished by leading the definitely religious experience subtly on into its social expression. A mere institute of human relations can never do the trick. Only when men are led on to see as Shakespeare saw that "individuals, however great they may be, however decisive their actions may appear, are not the ultimate power" does the entire driving force of the religious experience pour itself forth into the social channel, only then is man willing to sacrifice his own worldly success for something greater than himself.

The genuine religious experience has always been social at its heart, triumphantly so in the New Testament. Its ultimate achievement has not been a zero gazing, but has been a unity which includes all men in God. Those who sincerely set out to love God have done more good to their fellows than those who set out to love men, all isolated texts to the contrary notwithstanding: because those who love God seek for justice, while those who only love men seek for favors. The main task of religion today is to keep the thread unbroken which connects the two parts, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself."

The third aim of the Church should be that these three schools, the mystical, the practical and the theoretical, should get together to provide for the modern mind an intellectual resting place, a satisfactory working philosophy which will take into account all the light which has broken forth from God's word in book and earth and mind of man in the years which have passed. As one reads the words of the great liberal preachers of today, one sometimes wonders if we have in this infinitely varied and complicated world anything more as a philosophy of liberalism than is contained in the

old slogan, the greatest happiness of the greatest number; an ideal which is popular because it leaves all the basic problems unsolved, and only *seems* to say something like that which the human heart dimly feels. I am convinced that the two master words which point a way to a satisfactory philosophy of life are the two words INWARDNESS and UNITY, and that these two ideas are equally applicable in all the three spheres of man's activity of which we have spoken, and that they alone bring all three together into the Sacred Wheel in which all being is orderly and one. The source of our philosophy must be the recognition that just as all science is "a feeling for unity which holds the curious mind until there is discovered one law under which all lesser laws are subsumed," so the deepest instinct of the human mind and heart, the sum and substance of the first mystic religious experience is the anticipation of such an ordered unity between man's own heart, man's human society, and man's outer world. This urge is the deepest and surest thing of which man is conscious, all else that is good derives itself at one or two removes from it.

This is the only piece of absolutely direct knowledge which man possesses, he himself may exist or not, but of this thing he is sure that he *is* a demand for some sort of an inner unity in himself, with his fellows, and with his world. And an inner unity means a society organized so as to suggest and bring out into action the same impulse in others. For a while we thought that what we wanted was personality and leadership. We have got them in the world today with a vengeance. But these were not what we wanted. What we are demands not outer dictatorship and apparent unity ordered from without, but unity springing from within ourselves, within our fellows, and within the universe in God.

The Sacred Wheel is the diagram, somewhat artificial and too mechanical for our own use, a school blackboard explanation. Our religion gives us a more poetic, various, casual, beautiful symbol for the truth. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." All growth is from within. It is a mystic operation understood of none. But our only hope of sharing in its mysterious power is that we should retain our inner connection with the parent vine, one with God, and by our oneness with Him, part of every other branch in that vine, whose root is everywhere and whose branches spread far beyond our ken.

The Far Eastern Situation

HERBERT WELCH

OF the two regions most threatening to the peace and progress of humanity, one is the Far East; and with that region we in America have a unique connection. It is true that we have been entangled in the woes and struggles of Europe, but there are other semi Christian nations nearer to them than are we. But to the Orient we and our great neighbor on the north are those who are closest, among the countries where Christ has gained any notable influence. By geography, by trade, by missionary activity, we have the outstanding opportunity and responsibility to help. What, then, is the situation, and how can we serve the needs of those Oriental brothers of ours?

The most casual glance reveals that in the Far East political, social, economic, and intellectual changes are going on at unexampled speed. Nations are in process of being reborn, if not in a day, at least in a generation. A new sense of national power and national destiny, a new impatience of foreign domination, a new renaissance of ancient cultures mingled with the most modern thought, a breaking down of old family and community customs and restraints, a new commercial and industrial development, and a spirit of dissatisfaction and unrest which holds everything in flux, which opens all problems to new suggestions—these characterize present-day life just across the Pacific.

The key to the future is in the hands of Japan, and the attitude and purpose of Japan are not easy to define. If a single voice spoke for the entire country and if that voice spoke with frankness, we might prophesy with some assurance. But more than once, while the words of Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs set forth one policy, the deeds of army and of navy have been quite contrary. Those two departmental ministers, chosen from their respective services and responsible not to the Prime Minister but only to the Emperor, have seemed repeatedly, with their general staffs, to determine national movements with no regard to other branches of the government; which yet, as in the case of the Manchurian adventure in 1931, have felt constrained to accept and endorse the *fait accompli*.

There are in the army, which has been most pronounced in its self-

willed actions, two or three groups of conflicting ideas. Some would favor a cautious policy of more friendliness with China and Russia and of co-operation with the Powers of the West. Others, of the type of General Araki, believe in imposing the will and enlarging the borders of the Sunrise Kingdom by force. Some would be content with creating a series of independent or semi-independent buffer States on continental Asia to secure Japan against future possible attacks from her two big and growingly powerful neighbors. Others indulge in dreams of world leadership, beginning with the domination of eastern and southern Asia.

Two elements are involved: the economic and the political. Japan, crowded with her rapidly increasing population, poor in many of the raw materials which are essential to a modern State—coal, iron, lumber, cotton, wheat, rubber, oil—sees her neighbors with more sparsely settled areas and rich in the very commodities which she needs. Her immediate problem is to secure for herself an adequate supply of these under all conceivable circumstances. And she needs also assured markets for the products of her highly-developed industries. *We* may agree that she could attain these ends at much less expense and ultimately with more certainty by peaceful means; her actual leaders, misled by too numerous Western examples, have thought otherwise. Hence the drives in Manchuria and North China.

Moreover, Japan, mindful of the former aggressions of Western nations in the Far East, feels not wholly confident that "the white peril" is ended. And, further, she sees in China and Russia countries vastly larger than her own, in area and population and wealth, and can not but anticipate what may happen if China once becomes unified and if China and Russia both become industrialized and militarized. A far-sighted fear complex may lurk behind Japanese incursions. At least her motives, in the judgment of keen and well-informed observers, are far more political than economic. The problem before the patriotic Japanese statesman is surely no simple one.

On the other side is mighty Russia, with its bold experiments in social control and its crusading spirit of propaganda. And there is China, approaching unity among its provinces, with a quickened national consciousness, no longer willing to yield to foreign demands trenching upon its national dignity and national sovereignty, but apparently preparing to resist at any cost. The National Government is at last pretty firmly seated in power; it contains some men of unquestionable Christian character and unselfish patriotism; it is pursuing measures not simply for war preparation but for

social and economic reconstruction, particularly in the rural sections. We see today a China more united, more capable, and more resolute than any we have hitherto known.

The Christian objective is the building of a new world by the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. One of the realms in which the need of the coming of the kingdom is most acute is the realm of international relationships. This upheaves two questions. What is it that these Far Eastern nations, with their strained and tense relations, need to know and to do if a conflict, ruinous to them all and incalculable in its extent, is to be avoided? And what can the Christian Churches of America do to help?

At the outset, they, like others, need to understand their own interdependence. For years I have believed that the only road to permanent peace in the Orient is for Japan and China to find some common ground on which they can walk together in friendship. This does not mean the overawing of one by the other. It does not mean a mere treaty of peace and commerce, commanded and under duress accepted, with concessions and pledges. It means something deeper than peace—namely, genuine good will, based on an underlying racial relationship, the possession in common of a philosophy, a tradition, a language and literature, and a united aim and determination. Each needs the other. Each possesses something which the other lacks. China needs Japan's alert and progressive mind, the loyalty that stretches beyond the family to the nation, the spirit of team play. Japan needs access to China's resources, China's stability and infinite patience.

Again, the Oriental peoples should be reminded that war hurts everybody, victor and vanquished, and that it builds nothing. It may demonstrate who has the greater manpower or organizing ability or skill in the invention and use of scientific instruments of destruction; but it never proves who is right. And until right is settled, nothing has the promise of permanence. The feeling of injustice, the bitterness and hatred engendered by war, are poor materials out of which to construct an attractive future.

Once more, the nations of the Far East, like the nations everywhere, need to face the unequal distribution of the world's natural resources. One who believes in the universal Father may conjecture that in economics, as in topography, the world has been left in a crude and unfinished state in order that men might have the privilege and the glory of helping God to finish this world of His, and by seeking general justice might find themselves fairly compelled into brotherly solicitude and brotherly relations.

Whatever the explanation of present conditions—whether we regard the world as a wreck or as a piece of unfinished business—we must recognize the needs of the unprivileged nation as well as of the unprivileged man. Germany, Italy, Japan, and others, unsatisfied with the *status quo*, barred up to this time by nature and history from the fulfillment of legitimate aspirations, must be dealt with not so much as criminals, but as members of the family who have not received what is apparently their due share of the father's estate and who are seeking—even though by what we deem unjustifiable means—that which they regard as rightfully their own. The task of the world is not merely to repress the aggressor but to remove the cause of the aggression.

Now, if such is the situation and such its demands, what can the churches of America do to meet them?

We can persistently endeavor to cultivate in our members a truly international mind. What was sufficient for the tenth or the nineteenth century is not good enough for the twentieth century. The township mind is outdated, the sectional mind, the class mind, even the national mind, are not equal to the exigencies of this new day. We must pray that God will set *the world* in our hearts. If Christianity means anything in the social sphere, it means brotherhood. National conceit and racial pride and prejudice must fade away. The notion that this is a white man's earth must yield to the combined voices of science, history, and religion. The smug assumption must be surrendered that because for a few thousand years the white race has marched in the spotlight and has held the financial and political leadership of the world, this will continue forever. A truer perspective will bring national and racial humility.

This international mind will mean understanding and sympathy with the needs and the difficulties of all nations. It will cause us so to treat aliens living among us—and I refer especially to students and others from the Orient—that instead of coming to "the land of the free" as Christians and returning to their homes as non-Christians, as has frequently happened, they may preserve their beliefs as to the Christian character of this country, and saying, "Behold, how these Christians love one another—and love us," may with rejoicing go to spread the Gospel of good will among their fellows.

The churches may help the Orient by standing stoutly for democracy. There may be times and circumstances in which dictatorships are inevitable

and useful. But for an established system of government among a people educated and trained so as to be capable of self-government, surely democracy is the ideal. For democracy, as I understand it, is the social expression of the doctrines of the value of personality, the rights and dignities of the individual as a child of God, which are inherent in Christian teaching. And in these days of vociferous claims as to the virtues of other political and economic systems, under which freedom is curtailed, the absolute supremacy of the State, even in matters of conscience, is asserted, and religion is mutilated, we in this favored land, with education available to all, with a tradition of liberty, must hold up, if that is to be done anywhere, the standard of a government of the people, for the people, and by the people. It is not a question of form but of spirit. England, a monarchy, is a far better exhibit of democracy than Mexico, a republic. Forms may differ and change; the willingness to trust the people and be loyal to the will of the people is the heart of it all.

The churches of America can, ought, and will stand against militarism and imperialism in all their various disguises. We shall have to approach this project in no self-righteous or boastful spirit, but with somewhat timid and humble steps. We cannot forget the verdict of a well-known American historian that the two great imperialistic nations of the last century were Great Britain and these United States. We are aware that we are open to the suspicion that we wish to abolish war because we already have all the territory we can manage and natural resources to make us almost completely self-contained and self-sufficient, and that our interest in peace is now intended to prevent other nations from obtaining what is necessary to them for a full national life. Nevertheless, despite any misunderstanding or criticism, we must resist imperialistic policies, whether political or economic, and we must be steadfast friends of world peace, based on justice and good will.

Does this imply that the churches must advocate the extreme pacifist position? Some indeed do believe that absolute and uncompromising pacifism is the only thoroughly Christian attitude. They favor unilateral, radical, and immediate reduction in armaments or their complete abolition. They urge the withdrawal of chaplains as members of the armed forces. They argue for treaties and laws of neutrality, even when those take the shape of pacifism on a national scale. They do not shrink from the assertion that for any nation to go to war, at any time, for any cause

whatever, is a sin. A Christian man, a Christian church, we are told, must not participate in, must not countenance any war. Even if the most militaristic and belligerent nation is out to conquer the most innocent and helpless, it is better to let the outrage run than to meet it by fighting. If we are to be the promoters of peace, we must come with no blood upon our hands, whether of the innocent or of the guilty. So reasons the out-and-out pacifist.

Other men, equally sincere and equally intelligent, believe that such a course will not in the long run prove the most effective in maintaining peace and, what is of even more consequence, in establishing justice, in the Far East and elsewhere. Where good men so markedly differ, one must not dogmatize. Without arguing the question, I only add that as a matter of personal judgment, after these years in the Orient, I find myself increasingly unable to adopt the full pacifist theory. No wiser pronouncement in this field of earnest controversy has been made, so far as I know, than the report adopted last November by the annual meeting of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches. Space forbids quoting it, but it touches on such items as the necessity of "a national conscience of justice behind all national agreements." It urges that "the motives of American neutrality should not be selfish isolation but a conservation of resources to serve a suffering world," and favors placing discretion in the hands of the President to remove the embargo on the shipment of war materials to a country which has been "internationally judged to be unjustly attacked."

It also brings up the questions of colonies, currencies, population transfers, and the like, as subjects which demand consideration by the friends of peace. This leads me to my fourth suggestion concerning methods of service. Other motives than economic enter into war-making, yet economic motives have a large place. And the sponsors of brotherly international relationships must talk less about peace and more about the causes which lead to the violation of peace. Public opinion needs to be molded until our laws which affect the welfare of other nations than our own shall be enacted with a view to world advantage, rather than for "the selfish good of one sole race." When we frame a tariff, when we pass an immigration restriction, when we put up trade barriers and set quotas and conclude treaties, the day has passed when we can justify our acts by saying that they benefit our own people, and adding, "Let the rest of the world go hang!"

As Christians, "nothing human is foreign to" us; nothing which bears upon the interests of any man anywhere can rightfully be left out of our calculations. The churches can bring pressure to bear upon the government to initiate or join in world conferences designed to bring about by united action the equitable distribution and use of the goods of the whole earth for the advantage of the entire human brotherhood.

The churches can help the Far East by a revival of the missionary passion. The peace, progress, and prosperity of these nations depend in the last analysis upon the character of their citizens. Two things they, like all the rest of us, supremely need: intelligence and virtue; and moral character bases itself finally on religious faith. The Prime Minister of Japan called together leaders of Buddhism, Shintoism and Christianity, and in the name of the State summoned religion to do what the State alone could not do, in the creation of a dependable citizenship. To people those Eastern lands with men who have the mind of Christ, to spread His teachings and His ideals even beyond the Christian body itself, like leaven in the mass—this is the surest and the most potent way in which the problems of the Far East may finally be solved.

Lord Bryce, facing the breakdown of old restraints, seeing how Western education and Western habits have driven the youth of the Orient from the faiths of *their* fathers, uttered solemn words when he said, "They have now nothing to live upon, unless and until they receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Book Reviews

The Paradoxes of Jesus. By RALPH W. SOCKMAN. New York: The Abingdon Press. \$2.00.

THIS book will doubtless command a wide reading among the great number of persons who have heard Doctor Sockman preach in his own church and over the radio and have read his previous books, all of which are highly and deservedly popular. And for those others who have not yet heard him or read what he has written, this book may well serve as an introduction to his brilliant abilities.

In *The Paradoxes of Jesus* he is dealing with those teachings of our Lord in which one aspect of truth is set against another in a way which at first seems a contradiction, but which a wider perception recognizes as the full spiritual reality which one understands only when he has walked round it and seen it from both sides. Doctor Sockman begins with a reference which everyone will immediately recognize. It is urged, he says, that if we had more of "the simple gospel," all would be well. "The simple gospel" is what the man on the street says that he would go to hear if the pulpit would only preach it. . . . But how simple is the gospel of Jesus?" Doctor Sockman asks. "To be sure it contains truths so plain and clear that the untrained minds of innocent children can catch and follow them. . . . But when any one of the Synoptic Gospels is treated as a moving picture and not as a portrait, it reveals a succession of scenes often strangely self-contradictory and puzzlingly paradoxical. A thoughtful person reading the story of Jesus for the first time, might think of it as a book of riddles."

And though, of course, the gospel is not a book of riddles, it is, as Doctor Sockman points out, often a series of paradoxes; and the greatest paradox of all is not what Jesus said, but the fact of His life itself. The amazing part about His career is "not the way it ends but the fact that it has not ended. The up-country Leader who was killed during a Jewish Passover was more alive as a factor on the streets of Jerusalem forty days after His death than in the days of His flesh. And the story of Jesus is still running in serial form, to be read in new chapters of healed bodies and changed lives. The supreme paradox of the Palestinian is that He was killed but refuses to die."

One by one in the chapters that follow Doctor Sockman takes up some of the great aspects of Jesus' words and work which reveal the depth and wideness of His message. The titles of the chapters are always provocative of interest, such, for example, as these: "The Evaders of the Unavoidable," "The Conservative Revolutionary," "The Good Tempter," "The Prudence in Providence," "The Trustful Fear."

If one should introduce any caveat in regard to Doctor Sockman's manner of thought and expression, it would be that sometimes he comes almost to the point of having his strength become his danger. He has so apt and original a way of turning a phrase that he is tempted here and there to do it with a dexterity that seems too manifest. He himself gives a delightful commentary upon what paradoxical writing may be when he observes, "It has been whimsically remarked

that a paradox is a truth standing on its head to attract attention."

But not often, and certainly not in the great sweep of his treatment, does Doctor Sockman make the truth stand on its head. On the contrary, it stands on its feet and walks the sure ground of solid human experience. His interpretations of the meaning of Jesus again and again are not only brilliant in their insight; they have also a homely grasp upon the ordinary facts of life as the ordinary man understands them, so that the truth is made at home to him. Since each one of the chapters in the book deals with an independent theme, it is not possible to summarize the book as a whole, but one can best suggest the quality of it all by quoting certain sentences taken here and there from its pages.

Consider, for example, these: and mark with what extraordinary and unforgettable vividness Doctor Sockman has made some of the very things which seem most puzzling in the Gospels so luminous that one exclaims, "Of course. Why didn't I think of that before?"

In the chapter on "The Evaders of the Unavoidable," he is describing how some people get past the "hard sayings" of Jesus by breaking them up into little inconsequential texts. "Many readers of the New Testament do not read far enough or conscientiously enough to comprehend the links in the record or to feel the difficulties in linking the passages together. The majority of modern church members treat the Scripture somewhat as sentimental maidens treat wedding cake—that is, they break it into small pieces and sleep on it. Their knowledge of Jesus is just a collection of unrelated pictures. Not taking the pains to put them together, they do not experience the strain of harmonizing them."

Read in the same chapter this delight-

ful paragraph concerning those who do not want religion to be brought into inconvenient touch with everyday affairs: "That, in substance, is what many of our contemporaries say about the practicability of Jesus' ethics. And, paradoxically enough, many who say it are those who claim to 'believe the Bible from cover to cover.' Many a layman who would vote to dismiss his minister if the latter should question the virgin birth, would call the same minister a foolish dreamer if he claimed Jesus' ethical injunctions were to be taken literally. These orthodox heretics are numerous in our day."

Or read in the chapter entitled "The Conservative Revolutionary" this paragraph: "Yet Jesus was no ruthless iconoclast. He possessed an historical perspective which made progress toward the new by keeping track of the past. As the chauffeur's mirror on a modern car enables the driver to see what is behind without taking his major gaze from the road ahead, so Jesus kept in view the old laws of Israel in order that He might make better headway toward the new laws of the kingdom of heaven. For, significantly enough, it is when we would turn left that we most need to see the road behind us. Likewise, in our social progress it is our 'left' turns which need to be safeguarded by historical perspective lest in trying to move toward the new we be run into by some old error coming down the road bearing a modern license plate."

Such, then, is the quality of *The Paradoxes of Jesus*, a quality which is sustained throughout. The best advice the reviewer can give to any reader of these lines is that one should get the book and read it all.

WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE.

Grace Church in
New York.

A Program for Modern America.

By HARRY W. LAIDLER. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company. \$2.50.

HARRY W. LAIDLER has proved in his own work that it is possible to be a crusader without becoming, in any unfortunate sense of the word, a "propagandist." For many years he has been the "Brain Trust" of American Socialism and at the same time he has kept the confidence of social and economic thinkers of conservative views. Recently he was the head of the National Bureau of Economic Research while he carried on tirelessly his work for Socialism. His constant devotion to the cause of economic justice, his self-effacing disinterestedness, his wide and accurate knowledge, and his fairness and sheer reasonableness of statement make him one of the most useful and persuasive of all those who are working for a new order.

From its title this book might seem at first to be a repetition of what Doctor Laidler has written elsewhere, but that is not the case. His recent book, *Socializing Our Democracy*, was a statement of the case for Socialism and a discussion of the problems of social strategy in the achievement of Socialism. This book is intended to be a handbook for the person who is working for the next steps along any one of eighteen different lines. It would be equally helpful for the liberal who is attempting to reform capitalism and for the radical who believes in more fundamental change. Merely as a handbook of facts which are concisely stated and arranged for easy reference, the book is useful for ministers. It contains an extensive bibliography.

There is a chapter on each of the following subjects among others: Child Labor, Unemployment Insurance, Health

Insurance, Old-Age Pensions, Collective Bargaining, Housing, Agriculture, Taxation, Electrical Power, Civil Liberties, and the Constitution. Even a discussion of the international situation is included. The book concludes with a discussion of a new political alignment and social planning. Each chapter gives some history of the problem and a brief digest of the most relevant facts. Then the author summarizes the various proposed solutions and the arguments for and against them. He expresses his own opinion in most cases but does not obtrude it. He never allows it to be forgotten that any one of the specific reforms which he recommends is bound up ultimately with a fundamental change in the economic system, but he does not make that fact the real subject of the book.

During the next four years this will be a good book to have within reach by which to test the specific reforms which will be begun or carried forward by the administration. Most books written by Socialists would be difficult to use so directly in connection with next steps because of their preoccupation with the day after tomorrow, or with the puzzles of radical political strategy. Doctor Laidler is all the more helpful in that in his total Socialist philosophy he is a determined advocate of the democratic process.

JOHN C. BENNETT.

Auburn Theological Seminary.

Christianity and the Individual in a World of Crowds. By HALFORD E. LUCCOCK. Nashville: Cokesbury Press. \$1.50.

JUDGED on the basis of its resultant benefit to humanity, the most important discovery of the past decade was not in the mechanical, but in the social field.

It was the disclosure of the importance of the social virtues, and resulted in programs of national economic planning and social reform. We may predict with confidence that the greatest discovery of the years immediately ahead will be that the value of the old individual virtues of self-reliance, personal integrity, and individual worth must be reaffirmed.

Dr. Halford E. Luccock declares in his most recent book that the individual must not be crushed by the crowd. The reader may at first be disappointed that this prophet of the social gospel has turned "rugged individualist," but let him read on: "That noble word 'individualism' has been corrupted. It has come to stand for the economic theory undergirding free and unlimited exploitation of people. That is the trouble. There is great danger in an age in which 'rugged individualism' has been thrown out the window, that something else may be thrown out with it which is vastly different—individuality. We will never get a socially significant whole by adding together any number of insignificances."

Apollyon, the fiend of *Pilgrim's Progress*, attacked Pilgrim with the threat: "Here will I spill thy soul." In like manner, the soul of the modern individual is being attacked by a school of psychology, our economic environment, the pressure of the collective mind, the governmental agencies which have set out to save man; by the voice of the State demanding subjection of conscience, and by the effort of the Church to exact orthodox conformity. To these forces which would spill the soul of man, Doctor Luccock answers: "The colored-shirt mind is anti-Christ and anti-man."

Salvation of the individual from the forces which would destroy him is found in the Gospel emphasis on the supreme worth of the individual. Yes, Doctor

Luccock uses the word "salvation"; but he gives the old evangelistic term a new meaning for the social liberals. No inconsistency is found between individualism and the social gospel. Indeed, to be effective as a social reformer, one must have the incentive and the power which come from a knowledge of the worth of the individual in the sight of God. "The man who desperately needs faith in God is the man who is going to do something with that faith. It is the radical who needs personal religion, who needs sustaining faith."

The author of this very readable book disclaims any right to speak as a theologian, but the theologians will agree that his conclusions are right; and the readers of his book will agree that they are urgent.

J. EARL GILBREATH.

Abingdon, Virginia.

It Happened in Palestine. By LESLIE D. WEATHERHEAD. New York: The Abingdon Press. \$2.50.

THERE are already in existence a number of excellent volumes which have had marvelous success in conjuring up the Palestine of the past, from the monumental yet fascinating works of Sir George Adam Smith down to those delightful traveling companions, *A Pilgrimage to Palestine*, by Doctor Fosdick, and *In the Steps of the Master*, by Mr. H. V. Morton. It is, then, too much to expect a writer, even one with Mr. Weatherhead's undoubted imaginative gifts, to blaze an entirely new trail; but he covers lightly and gracefully the ground traversed by his predecessors.

The homiletic note is perhaps a little too pronounced for the ordinary reader, even the religious reader. For a visit to Palestine both creates and shatters faith;

it makes the Jesus of history inescapably real, but it dims the vision of the supernatural Christ. There are not many who can visit Bethlehem and say with our author: "The solid foundations of Christianity lie there immovable, a fact of history which none can deny." They hear not the "thunder and clash of unthinkable wings, round an incredible star," but "an infant crying in the night, and with no language but a cry." Nor are there many who can bathe on the beach at Tabghah and still imagine that Jesus might come to them "walking upon the waters." The chapters which grip the attention of the reader are not those in which the author describes his travels in the home of the Christian religion, but those in which he illuminates the narratives of the Gospels from his experience as a Christian psychotherapist.

Here Mr. Weatherhead makes a real and valuable contribution to our understanding of Jesus. The school of Form Criticism would dissolve the whole life of our Lord into myth and legend, and it is reassuring to know that the records of Jesus' healings and of his interviews with individuals have too obvious psychological truth to be the mere invention of pious but unlettered believers. The story of the paralytic at Capernaum, of the woman with the issue of blood, of Legion and the Gadarene swine, of the woman at Jacob's Well, live in these pages as they probably have not done since they were breathlessly passed from mouth to mouth in the marketplaces of Galilee and the bazaars of Jerusalem. One could wish that the author had not used the Fourth Gospel as historical material of the same value as the synoptics, but we are grateful for so much vivid interpretation. We put down many volumes on the Bible with an ache in our hearts: "They have taken away my Lord, and I

know not where they have laid him." But this book will assist many who long to know the real Jesus and to offer him the allegiance of their hearts.

T. K. SCOTT-CRAIG.

Visiting Professor,
Drew Theological Seminary.

Culture and Conscience: An Archaeological Study of the New Religious Past in Ancient Palestine. By WILLIAM CREIGHTON GRAHAM and HERBERT GORDON MAY. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. \$2.50.

MANY students of the Old Testament know nothing of archaeology. Many archaeologists know nothing of Biblical criticism. In either case attempts to interpret the Bible are inevitably unsuccessful, for the unwritten documents which the archaeologist uncovers and interprets are as important as the written sources of the literary critic, while the traditions embalmed in literature, unless critically used, cannot be combined with the archaeological materials. Professors Graham and May have made a most successful attempt to combine the two kinds of documents in a history of the relations of the developing culture of Palestine and the developing conscience of the ancient world, and especially of the Hebrews.

The book applies to Palestine and the Old Testament the method and point of view of the late Doctor Breasted's *Dawn of Conscience*. It is marked, first, by adequate criticism of the documentary sources in the Old Testament, second, by adequate knowledge of the surrounding cultures of the ancient Near East, and third, by adequate and accurate use of the recently discovered archaeological materials, even up to 1935. And it is marked also by a truly historical imagina-

tion which seeks to interpret the materials in their relations to the development of Hebrew morals and religion.

It is no discredit to the authors if some of their accounts of archaeological discoveries are already antiquated. New discoveries crowd upon one another so rapidly in Palestine that what is written today may tomorrow be proved incomplete or mistaken. Moreover, it is far from easy to piece together the information from the necessarily partial and incomplete reports which the archaeologist makes as his work is progressing. This explains minor errors, such as the statement that remains of eight Neanderthals—instead of nine—were found at Mughareh es-Sukhul, or the treatment of the Teleilat el-Ghassul civilization as Early and Middle Bronze, when it is now generally agreed that it was Chalcolithic. The non-existence of the "frieze of beasts" which a too-vivid imagination traced in the Umm Qatafa cave has not been given the same publicity as the "discovery." Neither the Neanderthaloid nor Natufian adults at Wad el-Mughareh seem to have been buried in the "embryonic posture." Such a posture for a child hardly proves a belief in a life after death as ordinarily understood.

It might also be pointed out that the first organized evidence of American interest in Palestine dates from 1870, not from 1900, and that the expedition of the American School of Oriental Research at Jerash in conjunction with Yale University, deserves to be called a "large-scale operation."

Doubtless in the total picture of the growth of Hebrew civilization on its spiritual side alterations will eventually be necessary. For this is really a first attempt. Even Stanley Cook's *The Religion of Ancient Palestine in the Light*

of Archaeology did not attempt so elaborate a synthesis as does this volume, and none of the histories of Old Testament religion make adequate use of the archaeological materials. But such criticisms as might be made do not alter the judgment that this is the best book on the subject which is now available and indispensable to the student of the Old Testament.

C. C. McCOWN.

Palestine Institute of Archaeology,
Pacific School of Religion.

In the Steps of Saint Paul. By H. V. MORTON. New York: Dodd Mead and Company. \$2.50.

THE successive travel books of H. V. Morton have become best sellers. His British publishers were not foolhardy in making a first printing of this volume of 200,000 copies.

Morton is a most painstaking author. His bibliography shows an abundant and well-selected list of books, bearing not merely upon his immediate topic, but upon many related subjects. The latest discoveries in archaeology are an example. Nor are the questions that trouble Biblical scholars unknown to him: the question of whether the Captivity Epistles were written not in Rome but in Ephesus, where now are only croaking frogs in pools, where once were the splendors of magnificence.

By travel, also, he has prepared for his writing. St. John Ervine, who met him in Asia Minor, writes in one of his books that Morton is not content to take the statements of others, but must confirm them by his own observations. By donkeyback, horseback, camelback, by coast boats and on foot, four times he traced the missionary journeys which Paul made with more comfortable facilities of travel in 47 to 59.

In England, Mr. Morton has the reputation of being unequalled in descriptive reporting. This reputation he vindicates in this book by colorful and accurate pictures of places and personalities, which he could not have depicted without minute knowledge.

He portrays Paul as a modern sort of a man, characterized by tremendous energy, single-mindedness, and what today we call "drive." From Jerusalem to Rome, he outlines his career as set over against the highly ornate background of the pageantry of the era of the Caesars.

We are closer to his hero as he tells of the custom of people of rank and wealth to dictate their letters to a secretary and then add a personal salutation with their own hands. This method Paul employed in writing his Epistles, the postscripts of which thus take on new command and appeal.

Many a traveler will respond to his ecstasy over the Parthenon. He quotes Mahaffy—"There is no ruin all the world over, that combines so much striking beauty, so distinct a type, so vast a volume of history, so great a pageant of immortal memories." Then he adds, "I thought to myself that never in my life had I seen anything so beautiful. You are the most lovely thing I have ever seen. You are the only ruin on earth that a man would care to see again, again and again, and I would like to climb this hill to see you every year until the end of my life."

Morton has the art of compressing important information and significant meaning into a sentence so that he must be read with alertness and can be read again and again. Nor is he wanting in making pungent applications—"Politicians ought not to be eligible for election until they have traveled the ancient world and perceived how direly savagery can

overwhelm and destroy all the gains of civilization."

This is a valuable and delightful book.

JOHN W. LANGDALE.

Book Editor of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Contemporary English Theology.

By WALTER MARSHALL HORTON.

New York: Harper and Brothers.

\$2.00.

"THE two main purposes" of this book, so Doctor Horton tells us, are "to promote a better understanding of English theology among my compatriots; and to cast light upon the present liberal theology in America by describing the similar crisis through which liberal theology in England has recently passed."

On the first aim he modestly calls it "a conducted tour," "a rough map of the territory to be explored" in English theology. The outstanding landmarks are "the persistent traditions," Catholic, Protestant, and Liberal. To each of these "traditions" he supplies a short historical introduction, and then chooses leading names: for example, under "Liberalism Today" he groups L. P. Jacks, who edits *The Hibbert Journal*, as representing Unitarianism; Dr. W. R. Inge, Platonism; F. R. Tennant, Scientific Empiricism; and bundles B. H. Streeter, C. E. Raven, and John Macmurray together as "straws showing how the wind blows" for Liberalism's future.

Under Catholicism he takes *Essays Catholic and Critical* as his main guide; John Oman fulfilling the function for Protestantism. The chief books in each "tradition" are very well summarized, and on the whole, the trends and tendencies of each group are well described. Particularly well done are the résumés of Doctor Inge's, Dr. F. R. Tennant's

and Dr. John Oman's works. The present Canon J. R. Campbell's transition from "Liberalism" to moderate Anglicanism is taken as typical of the "decline and fall of" theological Liberalism, now so evident.

Writing from England, your reviewer would say that Doctor Campbell is given a prominence out of true perspective. Not all nonconformists treated him harshly; John Clifford stood up for him, though not subscribing to his opinions. Campbell was too impressionist; his notorious passage on "Sin as a blundering quest for God" was an echo of Emerson's saying, "Man, though in brothels and jails, or on gibbets, is on his way to all that is good and true." (*Representative Men*.) The note on Sir Thomas More, also, leaves out More's intolerance as a magistrate—sadly out of step with *Utopia*. But these are small blemishes; the broad characteristics of the transition are truly and firmly drawn. These are that "transcendence instead of immanence, a more serious view of evil, social pessimism instead of social optimism, and a lower estimate of science for theology"—"these are the characteristic trends of the post-war period" (p. 38). Specially brilliant is the analysis of Dean Inge's mental progress.

One serious criticism would be that British theology has moved more from a Biblical basis than from any philosophical starting point. And the Biblical view of man is regarded as a more real statement than any science and philosophy can give: for they cannot take sin seriously enough. Of the immense work on the Bible, Doctor Horton has scarcely anything to say. Philosophy rather than theology proper is what he fixes his eye upon.

A third purpose—not plainly expressed—dominates this book, namely: the at-

tack on Karl Barth's views. It is not our purpose to defend Barth at all—he can do that effectively himself—but it is misleading to say, "His (Sir Edwyn Hosking's) favorable attitude toward Barth is quite exceptional in England," for in Anglicanism, Bishop Rawlinson (of Derby), Canon Kenneth Mozley (of Saint Paul's), Dr. A. J. Macdonald (the Evangelical leader), Doctor Camfield (a Congregationalist), Doctor Micklem (of Mansfield), Doctor Lamont (Moderator of the Church of Scotland), not to say J. S. Whale and others, are deeply imbued with the "Theology of Crisis."

Still, the book is very welcome: "Old England" is preferred to Germany, and that is a gain. The "via media" of the English mind, avoiding the extremes of "Left" and "Right" in theology, is clearly shown by Doctor Horton. He might have said more of K. E. Kirk's *The Vision of God*, of Dean Malden's *The Church and Realm* and *The Promise of the Father* as truer to theology as represented in the "central" group. As a "guide" the book serves its purpose well, and as a vigorous piece of writing it is deserving of all praise.

R. BIRCH HOYLE.

London, England.

We Would Know Jesus. By JOHN A. SCOTT. New York: The Abingdon Press. \$1.50.

It is in the quest for the historical Jesus that the words of the title, "We Would Know Jesus," are used, and the treatment of the subject is that of a trained classical scholar and in accord with the object of the John C. Shaffer Foundation at Northwestern University for promotion of the appreciation of the life, character, teaching, and influence of

Jesus, under whose auspices the substance of the book was given in four lectures.

The subject is of vital interest to Christian faith, especially in view of the inroads of the most recent type of Gospel criticism, known as *Formgeschichte* or Form Criticism, which would make the Gospels a string of unrelated stories about Jesus and the words of Jesus, like pearls on a string, the product of the Church without much historical foundation.

The author does not address himself to the discussion of this latest phase nor of its immediate predecessor, the two-document theory of the problem of the Synoptic Gospels. He bases the historical Jesus on the testimony of writers outside the New Testament; the origin and preservation of the manuscript documents of the Gospels; Luke the great historian; and the comparison of Socrates and Jesus as historical personalities.

Accepting as authentic the suspected testimony of Josephus that Jesus was "the Christ," and adding thereto that of Tacitus, Pliny, and Lucian, who knew nothing of the contents of the Gospels, he finds them independent authorities for the life of Christ. Of the same character are the extra-canonical sayings of Jesus in recently discovered papyri which "confirm the truth of our Gospels."

The author points out that the first generation of Christians, that is, the eyewitnesses, felt no need for writing down the deeds and words of Jesus, for they knew them and expected Christ's speedy return. Mark made the first attempt and wrote what he learned from the apostle Peter. Matthew reproduced Mark's story and supplemented it from his own recollections as a disciple of Christ. Luke, who like Mark, was also not one of the eyewitnesses, collected his data with greatest care; while John had all the other three to aid him. Though the

autographs, because written upon perishable papyrus, have disappeared, the immense amount of later copies, constantly increasing by recent finds, leave it beyond question that we have a substantially reliable record of the life and teachings of Jesus.

But Luke is the great historian; and the author goes into raptures over his painstaking effort and accuracy to convince Theophilus and us of the certainty of the gospel tradition. The author's treatment of Luke as the physician of Paul who had come to him to be cured from the disease of the "thorn in the flesh," while considerably imaginative, makes fascinating reading.

Socrates, like Jesus, left no personal account of his life and teachings and we are dependent mainly upon the interpretation that his disciple Plato placed upon them. It is so with the greater Jesus, and there is no sufficient reason in either case to question the correctness of what has come down to us.

This is a book written not by a professional New Testament specialist but by a layman for laymen. Back of it lies a robust faith in the reality of Jesus. It is constructive and assuring and will not be without value even to the professional. So far as it goes it carries with it the authority of the conclusions arrived at by a scholar who has most of his life dealt with the critical problems of Greek and Roman history and literature.

ISMAR J. PERITZ.

Syracuse University.

John Wesley and Modern Religion.

By UMPHREY LEE. Nashville: Cokesbury Press. \$2.50.

ELEVEN of these brilliant chapters deal with Wesley and his own time. The application to modern religion does not

appear until the twelfth chapter is reached, which brings the book to a close. Doctor Lee, now dean of the School of Religion in Vanderbilt University, who has been immersed in the study of Wesley's life and opinions for a decade, says by way of preface, "Only by a re-examination of Wesley's religion and theology can one hope to determine whether John Wesley is a stained-glass saint or a living prophet."

The author's research has carried him into two fields: England in the eighteenth century, in which Wesley lived his life and of which he was a notable part; and Wesley, himself, now for the first time fully revealed in his letters, journals, sermons and treatises. Doctor Lee does not accept former judgments without re-examination, and his reasoned conclusions are often at variance with the traditional view, or even with those of other recent writers, like Professor Cell. His eighteenth century is no religious Sahara. At least it has its oases. Instead of a dead uniformity, he finds many signs of life—not only rationalism, but emphasis on corporate religion, societies for nurturing the inner life, and in the humbler ranks of society a variety of prophetic and mystical movements. Religion, pure and undefiled, surrounded Wesley's parsonage boyhood, and before he was thirty Jeremy Taylor, à Kempis and William Law had awakened him to the need of making religion the basis of his own life. Doctor Lee insists that his belief in "Christian Perfection" dates from Oxford and the pre-Aldersgate years. At Oxford, also, he abandoned the idea of a solitary religion, and accepted that of the society, "The Holy Club." The Georgia experience helped him by disclosing some of his own shortcomings, and by bringing him into close contact with the rude colonists and with the Mora-

vian type of religion. The High Churchman returned to London defeated, disheartened, even doubting that he was a Christian. Then burst upon him the emotional experience of Aldersgate, from which at first Wesley was prone to date his "conversion," though Doctor Lee's microscopic scrutiny of his later writings and revisions proves that he modified and recanted certain strong expressions to the effect that until that strange "heart-warming" he had never been a Christian. "It is necessary to emphasize that attempts to interpret that experience as an evangelical conversion which transformed Wesley from a sinner to a saint, or from a naturalistic humanist to a Christian, are in contradiction to Wesley's own judgment, and are misreadings of the facts." This reversal of tradition is a sample of the author's success in digging up new and conclusive evidence. His method and its results, as shown in the chapters on "Salvation," "Christian Perfection," "The Discipline of Life," and "The Church," give us a fresh and authoritative picture of Wesley's teachings—not always that commonly received among us.

Here is the supreme value of the book, rather than in the final chapter where Doctor Lee essays to show what Wesley means to modern religion. In brief he traces Wesley's influence in the nineteenth century along these lines: "The mitigation of orthodoxy, the softening of older mechanical and harsh conceptions of God and His relations to the world; the exaltation of Christian experience; the dominance of ethical interest; a marked humanitarianism; a lingering, if sporadic, interest in perfection; and a predilection for organization." It is Doctor Lee's opinion that, if modern religion has departed from Wesley, it is because this generation has "lost the assump-

tions which the prophet held as primary." Yet he contends that "The real Wesley, seen in the light of his full intention, has a word, not only for a generation exulting in spiritual freedom and in the employment of their emotions in religious experience, but for a time that has seen the results of overemphasis upon these elements of religion."

In the brief space allotted to this notice, there is only room to say that this book, as no other, rescues Wesley from the fog and mists of antiquity and gives us the real man against the background of his own time—and of our own. Furthermore, the work is couched in admirable literary style, abounding in epigrammatic expressions and witty characterizations, which the delighted reviewer can scarce forbear to quote.

JAMES R. JOY.

New York City.

Highways of Christian Doctrine. By

SHIRLEY JACKSON CASE. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company. \$2.00.

Early Christian Life as Reflected in Its Literature. By DONALD WAYNE RIDDLE. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company. \$2.50.

John Defends the Gospel. By ERNEST CADMAN COLWELL. Chicago: Willett, Clark & Company. \$1.50.

THESE three volumes, written by teachers from the same university and published during the past year by one firm, are also bound together by a common point of view. They are treatments of Christian history with complete detachment and betray no personal allegiance to the themes under discussion. Religion is approached as a persistent feature of culture, of which Christianity is one of its expressions.

Dean Case selects the figure of

"roads" for his series of five lectures on the history of Christian doctrine. It is really an aeroplane journey, not only because of its brevity, but because of the Olympian calm with which the erudite scholar looks down on the toiling pilgrims of earlier centuries from the height of his twentieth-century illumination. Obviously such a treatment is interesting primarily for the revelation of the mind of the author in his selection and treatment of materials.

The thesis of the book is that Christian doctrines were "shaped in accordance with the state of mind imposed upon the world by the realistic conditions of contemporary life. . . . In the last analysis a doctrine proves acceptable because it yields satisfaction." Apprehension of truth is not taken into consideration, for that would be a personal evaluation which is out of place in a historical treatment. No inner sympathy is betrayed for any traditional formulation, certainly not for Luther, who found release in "the notion of the forgiving love of God revealed in Christ."

It is only for the modernists that Case reserves his commendation. Thomas Aquinas was a modernist of the thirteenth century. The twentieth-century Catholic modernists had the misfortune of appearing when dogma had been crystallized within the ideas of the earlier group. But modernism is a method, not a dogmatic creed, and has no finality. We must be prepared to break new ground and discover new highways. The only cure for the defects of modernism is more modernism.

Sidelights on the present situation are by no means lacking. Dean Case perceives a disillusionment in postwar theologians which has led to a revival of certain features stressed by Augustine during the collapse of the ancient world.

"The attempts made in certain quarters today to reconstruct Christian doctrine on a dichotomy of reason and revelation unified by means of dialectic certainly has a genuinely medieval flavor."

This is a much-needed warning, and the masterly survey of doctrinal formulations is a provocative challenge to modernist thinking. But it leaves a question which cannot be answered from the author's premises. When does Christian doctrine cease to be *Christian* doctrine and become something else? Is the willingness to accept the name sufficient? Is it enough to claim continuity with the Christian tradition? Is Christianity the spiritual phase of successive cultures, or is it God's good news for man? Obviously no historian as such can answer these questions, but any theologian must, whether he be modernist or traditionalist.

The other two books deal with detailed aspects of the first century of Christian development. Professor Riddle attempts to break new ground in the setting forth of *Early Christian Life*. He divides his story into three parts, Before the Gospels, The Gospel-Making Period, and After the Gospels. Only the letters of Paul and the oral materials incorporated into the Gospels fall within the first. A brief treatment of Form-Criticism is given and related to the points of view developed by Burton and Case at Chicago. Hebrews, Ephesians, Clement I, and Revelation are assigned to the "Gospel-Making Period," which makes a chapter with a minimum of unity in a presentation of the *life* of the developing Church.

The best part of the volume is the treatment of the later books where there is more of an organization around the problems. Not all would agree on as late a dating for some of the books, nor on the insistent depreciation of the im-

portance of doctrine, but the attempt to draw a distinct picture of the practical problems of life leads to valuable results. We are led to see not a static norm, but continuous reaction to a changing environment on the part of the emerging cult.

Professor Colwell propounds a new thesis concerning the purpose of the Gospel of John, aptly called "an erratic block" in the Early Church. He believes that the evangelist sought to win a higher social status for the gospel by sloughing off the objectionable features and indirectly answering current attacks through his changes in the portraiture of Jesus. According to the author, John made of the gospel story a typology of the religious axioms of the Hellenistic world.

The volume is a good illustration of the fact that a collection of individual observations does not necessarily add up to the substantiation of a thesis. Colwell holds, "John's achievement was that he retold the gospel story in a fashion that made it less Jewish in vocabulary, in religious ideology and in the type of religious experience portrayed." That certainly is the key to an understanding of the gospel; but many will feel that it reveals the constructive teacher within the cult, rather than an avowed apologist.

CLARENCE TUCKER CRAIG.

The Graduate School of Theology,
Oberlin College.

The World and God. Library of Constructive Theology. By H. H. FARMER. New York: Harper and Brothers. \$3.00.

THIS volume by Professor H. H. Farmer, recently appointed Professor of Systematic Theology in Westminster College, Cambridge, is dedicated to John Oman and in many points reflects the in-

fluence of that distinguished thinker. The author concentrates attention upon those aspects of God's relation to His world which involve His dealing with individualities. The fundamental thesis of the book is that "the essence of religion in all its forms is a response to the ultimate as personal" (p. 28). The author is concerned therefore to point out what are the basic elements in personal relationship, and to show how these meet in those aspects of the religious experience in which God's activity as person appears most clearly, for example, revelation, providence, miracle, and prayer.

The first part of the book analyzes these concepts, shows that they correspond to something basic in the nature of man, and concludes by developing a theory of God's relation to nature, which, while compatible with the assumptions which underlie modern physical science, makes place for the personal activity of God in religion.

The second and shorter part of the book applies the general principles developed in the first part to the specifically Christian experience of reconciliation, and in the light of that experience restates the doctrines of providence and answer to prayer in the fuller and more concrete context thus given.

If it be true, as Doctor Farmer agrees, that Harnack is right when he says that "he who knows the Christian religion from the inside is in a position to know something about all religions" (p. 183), it is a fair question whether it would not prove more enlightening to begin with a discussion of the Christian experience as

we actually meet it in its classical representatives and then from that proceed to the more general discussion of religious experience, which is the theme of the first part of Doctor Farmer's book. *Latet dolus in generalibus*, is a maxim which theologians as well as philosophers may well lay to heart, and he who has experienced the life-giving power of Christian faith may well be content to leave to the philosophers the solution of some of the metaphysical puzzles whose insolubility Professor Farmer frankly confesses but which nevertheless excite his interest as a thinker.

If one were to raise one query it would be whether the author is right in saying that our Christian faith must affirm that the new world is exempt, "not only from sin and death, but also from the essential limitation of the time form as such" (p. 305). The fact that on the preceding page the author is constrained to admit that "the natural order does have some sort of permanent place in the purpose of God, and is not merely a framework and stage for the fashioning of man," would seem to raise the question whether Doctor Farmer is entirely at ease over the thesis which he has set up. It is easy in words to banish the time factor from the life of the redeemed; not easy to see how, if this is done, the distinctive character of what we call personality can be preserved either in God or in man.

WILLIAM ADAMS BROWN.

Union Theological
Seminary.

Bookish Brevities

Two notable articles on theology appear as the first and second numbers in this issue of RELIGION IN LIFE. The first, "The Restoration of Theology," is the address delivered by Dr. John A. Mackay at his recent inauguration as President of Princeton Theological Seminary, while the second, "The Premises of Theology and the Task of Preaching," was the inaugural address of Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, as Roosevelt Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary.

In the *Hibbert Journal* of January, 1937, James Moffatt writes of Dr. E. A. Leslie's *Old Testament Religion* as a capital treatise with depictions of arresting power.

John R. Tunis discusses his college class of 1911 in his book *Was College Worth While*. He quotes one of his classmates as confessing that his worst intellectual habit is that of reading book reviews in place of buying books.

Fourteen per cent of the upper classmen of Harvard University have this year elected courses in English, whereas twenty-five per cent made such selections in 1926. Forty per cent this year have elected history, government, and especially economics, which is a marked increase over such electives a decade ago.

A weak tree drops its apples before they are ripe; a weak writer his books.

It is not the multiplication of our seeings that increases our lives, but the penetration of them.—David Grayson.

The Rev. Robert B. Pattison of Ossining, New York, has compiled a list of 180 novels whose titles are biblical expressions. He finds the unique ability of Jesus to say common things in an uncommon way illustrated in the number of books and plays whose titles are derived from his words. Of these he cites a list of forty-five, including *Things New and Old*, and two others by Arnold Bennett, *A Few Figs From Thistles*, by Edna St. Vincent Millay, and *Children of the Marketplace*, by Edgar Lee Masters.

"We like a writer much as we like individuals, for what he is, simply, underneath his accomplishments. Oftener than we realize, it is for some moral quality, some ideal which he himself cherishes, though it be little discernible in his behavior in the world. It is the light behind his books and is the living quality in his sentences." So writes the master-craftsman, Willa Cather, in her newest book, *Not Under Forty*.

The critic is usually unpopular—a legless man who teaches running, Channing Pollock calls him. Arthur Symons more justly describes his functions: "The aim of criticism is to distinguish what is essential in the work of a writer. It is the delight of a critic to praise, but praise is scarcely a part of his duty. What we ask of him is that he should find out for us more than we can find out for ourselves."

The poet, T. S. Eliot, would have a Christian element in criticism. He writes: "It is our business, as readers of literature, to know what we like. It is our business, as Christians as well as

readers of literature, to know what we ought to like. It is our business as honest men not to assume that whatever we like is what we ought to like; and it is our business as honest Christians not to assume that we do like what we ought to like."

In a recent number of *The Expository Times*, Principal H. Wheeler Robinson discusses the best books on the Old Testament. He writes: "So soon as a student of the Old Testament has gone beyond the textbook stage, and is able to refer to sources for himself, he will need access to those which give the Babylonian and Assyrian background to much of the Old Testament. This is best supplied to the English student by *Cuneiform Parallels to the Old Testament*, translated and edited by Robert W. Rogers."

Idwal Jones, writing in *The Saturday Review of Literature* on the state of literary thought and endeavor along the Pacific coast, states, "We can only hope there are some, who, despite their interest in unrest and readjustment, will not let it interfere with their respect for pure letters. Those poets gone muzzy with economics have been grinding out wares as tuneless as an ungreased cartwheel and what more hideous warning do we need than the usual social novel? What the professors can do ever so much better than the artists had better be left to them."

Sir Josiah Stamp, author of *Motive and Method in a Christian Order*, has been elected president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the highest academic recognition in Great Britain. In his inaugural address he argued that science hitherto has concentrated far too exclusively on its

more physical branches, to the damage of the social sciences. He held that actual scientific discovery is the least difficult part of the process by which human progress is achieved. The tempo of technical change has become too fast for man to keep up therewith. It is on adaptability that any twentieth-century economic system will stand or fall. We have spent much and long upon the science of matter and the greater our success the greater must be our failure unless we turn also at long last to an equal advance in the science of man.

In *Prisons and Beyond* Sanford Bates tells of how he sought to utilize the recovery value of reading in the Federal prison system. The custom had been to accept donations of books from any source and of every age and place them upon the shelves, in the hope that some day they might be read. He secured trained librarians, who carefully selected books, and he provided congenial surroundings. There followed an astonishing increase in the amount of reading, especially of the kind calculated to carry a reader to higher moral and intellectual planes. The average number of books distributed per man rose to five volumes per month, and at McNeil Island Penitentiary the amount of non-fiction reading at one time exceeded that of fiction. The conclusion was reached that nowhere is the reading of books a more potent influence in the lives of men than in prison.

Mr. Bates quotes E. Kathleen Jones: "Books are like an open door
Out of which the mind can soar,
Rove the world on mighty wing,
Watch the stars and planets swing.
Though the body shackled be,
Books can set the spirit free."